Uses and Abuses of Our Times and Our Spaces

THE North American Review

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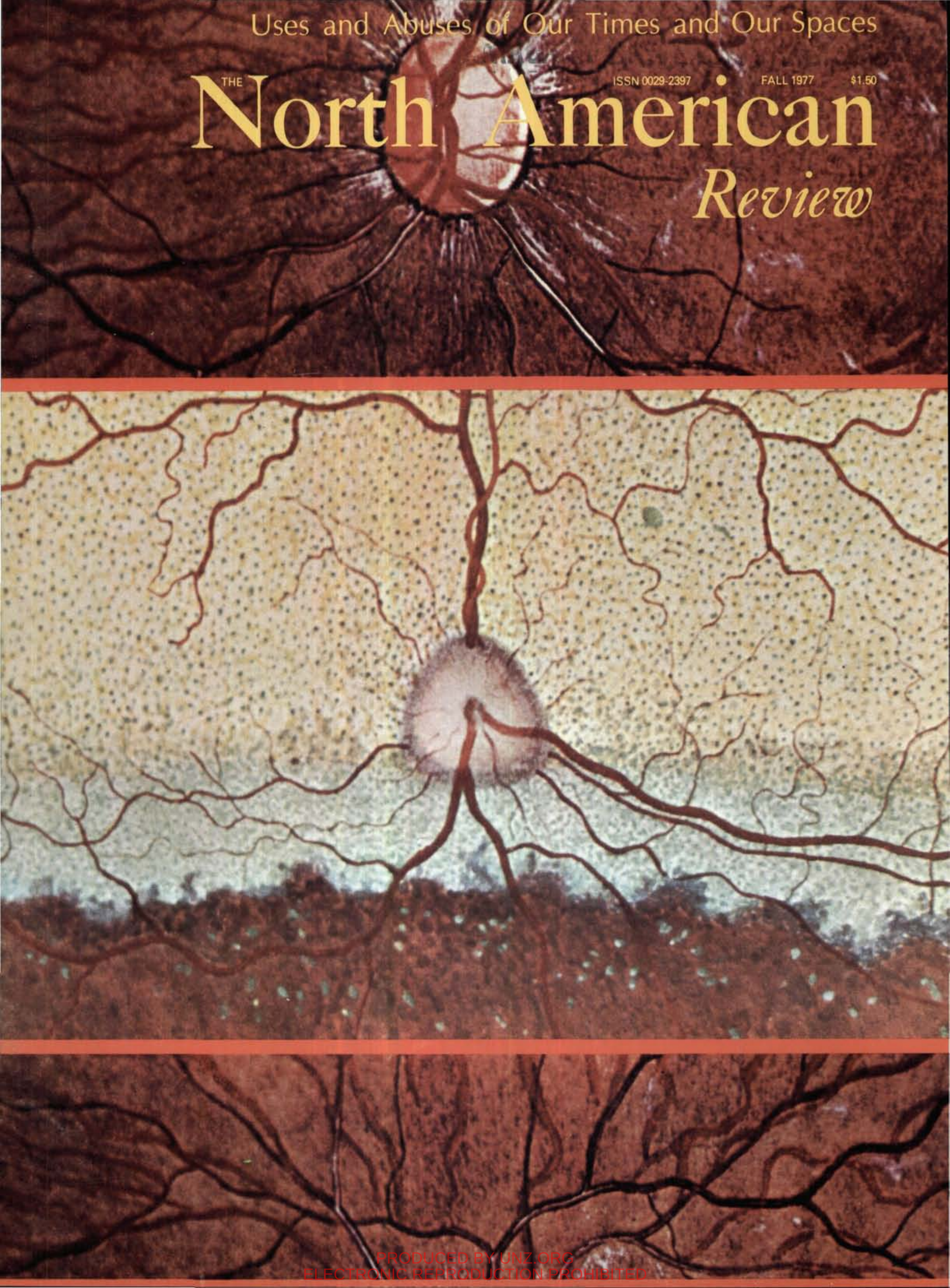

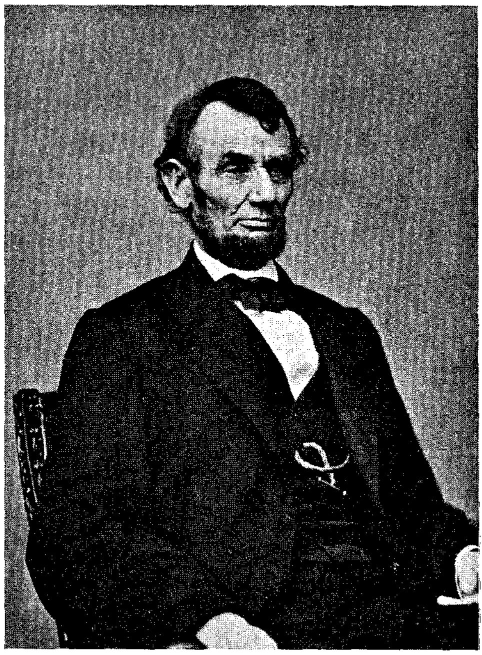

Photo: Matthew Brady

What sort of man reads the North American Review?

EDITORIAL NOTE.

The publishers of the North American Review have had the honor of receiving the following letter from the President of the United States.

"Executive Mansion,
Washington, January 16, 1864.

"Messrs. Crosby and Nichols:–

"Gentlemen: The number for this month and year of the North American Review was duly received, and for which please accept my thanks. Of course I am not the most impartial judge; yet, with due allowance for this, I venture to hope that the article entitled 'The President's Policy' will be of value to the country. I fear I am not quite worthy of all which is therein kindly said of me personally.

"The sentence of twelve lines, commencing at the top of page 252, I could wish to be not exactly as it is. In what is there expressed, the writer has not correctly understood me. I have never had a theory that Secession could absolve States or people from their obligations. Precisely the contrary is asserted in the Inaugural Address; and it was because of my belief in the continuation of these obligations, that I was puzzled, for a time, as to denying the legal rights of those citizens who remained individually innocent of treason or rebellion. But I mean no more now than to merely call attention to this point.

"Yours respectfully,

"A. Lincoln."

[Nothing could have been further from the intention of the Editors than to misrepresent the opinions of the President. They merely meant that, in their judgment, the policy of the Administration was at first such as practically to concede to any rebel who might choose to profess loyalty, rights under the Constitution whose corresponding obligations he repudiated.]

From *The North American Review,* April 1864

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The North American Review

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AMERICAN EYE

Nighthawk: A Hang Gliding Journal

"If I have to run, I'm not running out on
 you.
If I have to shake a little sand out of my
 shoes. . . "
 — Paul McCartney, "Time To Hide"

1. Rushing the Season

Like a bluewing teal, I became an early migrant and left Livingston in August. My money was gone, and I hoped to earn some where I thought flying would be best, in southern California. As I pulled out onto I-90 I looked back across a field of yellow sunflowers, past Stillman's little ranch and the river toward the big mesa-shape of Sheep Mountain. No one had ever flown from it. *Maybe next year*. Beyond and above the sunlit mountain a great thunderhead trailed mist, a cumulonimbus stacked and darkening, spreading into an anvil at thirty or forty thousand feet, on an eastward course toward Billings.

The road took me west through the Rockies, away from the flood-green Yellowstone and the little cow town of Livingston, along bottomlands where watercourses were marked by silver maple and cottonwoods, a countryside of quaking aspen and sagebrush and pine, a few skeletal cottonwoods peeling bark like ancient embalmer's windings. Plenty of hayfields ripening, some already cut. In the afternoon's slanting light the bales looked like gold bricks, furry bullion, waiting to be picked up. Every rancher conscious of the straightness of his stack as his wife might be about the level of her hem. Sometimes a stack shifts and leans like a Saturday night rancher at the door of the Long Branch. Each stack surrounded by a little fence. By a neat stack near Three Forks I saw a chestnut quarter horse craning his neck through the barbed wire, lipping at the haystack safely behind.

A dark Pacific weather front squatted on the continental divide before me. Its approach seemed to call up the nighthawks. They were all about, dipping in the air and flashing the diagonal stripe on the underside of their wings. They fly so well but they flap. I wondered about the glide ratio of a nighthawk, of a raven, a buzzard or heron. Driving down Pipestone Pass into Butte I hit a wall of wind that shook the porkvan hard and had me wondering about the strength of my lashings, the rubber cords and nylon straps holding my glider on the roof rack. The Blue Angel's jets waited on Butte's airport apron, but the wind was fierce and it started raining. There would be no airshow. No birds flying either, in that much wind.

All afternoon and into the night I drove through rain, across the Idaho panhandle, through eastern Washington and over Snoqualmie Pass in the Cascades. I hoped to fly Dog Mountain once more, in the best soaring conditions, the trailing edge of a dying front. The wetness gave my truck a sour odor, a smell of molding carpet, mud and dirty laundry and stale cigarette smoke. Outside air was fresh; I could smell wet sage and pine and cut hay.

Despite the rain Dog Mountain was closed for the summer because of fire hazard. I drove up to the top in the morning anyway, to the half-acre flattened point at the peak where a few weeks ago scores of new, colorful and strangely shaped gliders had been opened and stacked on their noses during competition at the nationals. No one was up there, just muddy ground covered with tire marks. Some tattered red and yellow plastic streamers blew weakly at the edge of the cliff launch, and patches of steamy fog lay in hollows down by Davisson Lake. The slightest breeze moved a line of ripples on the gray water. I heard the croaking of a raven in the woods below me, and the cry of an osprey came up the hillside, *keer, keer, keer*.

* * *

I drove south through rain forest and then up the broad cultivated Willamette Valley to Eugene, home of my alma maters the South Eugene High Axemen and the Oregon Ducks. Eugene called itself the lumber capital of the world, but that was in the fifties, there were more trees and fewer people and no spruce budworm. I was eight years old in nineteen fifty when I drove into Eugene the first time with my parents from Wisconsin. The Korean War was in the headlines. We had a thirty-seven Ford wagon—a woodie, the surfers call them now—and we arrived in the lumber district to stay the first night at Seal's Motel. It had a neon sign of a sea lion bouncing a ball on his nose. I walked up the roadside looking at the mills and got a piece of ash in my eye from the old wigwam burners the mills used then for the bark and slabs and tree parts they didn't want. Crud in the air was all right with me then because I loved the smells of sawdust and woodsmoke and the way the burners looked at night when they were stoked full and glowing, and chains of sparkles fled through the screens rounding the tops of the rusted tipis into the dark.

There were about thirty thousand people in Eugene then. Now there are a hundred thousand. The old parts of the city have concrete streets with maples arching across. The new parts are like suburbs everywhere. I visited my ex-wife, stayed two days with old friends and wanted to leave. After eight years of Tucson's warm desert climate my home town was too cool and damp, the gray Pacific fronts too depressing. The tall cement grain elevator where pigeons lived, the wooded streets where I rode my bicycle delivering papers, the green lawns and shrubs, even the smoke from the ryegrass fields where they were burning stubble made me ache with nostalgia. On my way out west eleventh I spent three hours going to gas stations and recappers, and when I finally exhausted my hustle I had two fat belted tires installed and balanced on the rear of the porkvan. They were only half used and worth the thirteen dollars and sixty-five cents.

* * *

Driving Route F through deep coastal woods toward highway 101 I saw a flat black cloud that proved to be smoke from a forest fire. Green rural fire trucks were parked by the wooden bridge over the Siuslaw at Mapleton. Volunteers in plaid shirts stood talking on the gravel shoulder, in a weird orange light under the smoke. On the placid river outboard cartoppers left slow wakes, fishermen trolling for searun cutthroat. A bad fire would be unlikely if there had been enough rain to tempt the trout back to fresh water.

At the C&D boat dock I stopped to check on the fishing. I used to troll the Siuslaw for bluebacks, as we called them, with a flasher, a Ford fender, and a worm. It would be more fun to catch them on flies. On the dock, I looked at the hillside across the river. There was a metal spar pole up there atop the ridge in a fresh-logged clearing. They have their own language, the loggers. A poached deer is a hillside salmon, a stick of dynamite thrown into a salmon pool is a DuPont spinner. When we used to hunt ducks in August we called it rushing the season.

I could smell woodsmoke from the fire in the seabreeze pushing upstream. An immature gull soared the boathouse. A husky blond boy about twenty was running the dock. He was using a hoist to drop a small cabin cruiser into the river when I approached him. He seemed to mellow as I let on I was a fly fisherman. A sign told fish cleaning prices:

Up To 15″ 25¢
15-17″ 35¢

I asked the obvious questions, he gave the deserved answers.

"Real good," he said. "Early in the morning and late in the evening."

Searun trout often do a lot of jumping when they enter fresh water, maybe to knock off the sea lice. I didn't see a fish jump, so I didn't think there was any fishing worth waiting around. Driving out of the C&D parking lot, I rolled up to speed and was lighting a joint when a cop came weaving up behind me rapidly, flashing a red light from the windshield. For a paranoid moment I thought he had some kind of pot radar. The trooper was big, pleasant, puffy. *Likely smart and well-trained*, whined the trickery of my paranoia.

"Do you know you're overloaded?" he asked. O God, how did they find out? He was driving a white Pontiac sedan with highbacked bucket seats. It crouched behind my van with its sharky grill an open maw and two evil red eyes blinking from the windshield. But it was about the glider. After measuring my van and doing a few calculations in his notebook the officer said it was no use, he'd have to give me a warning. I had a ninety-six inch wheelbase, he said. No matter if I put a red flag on it, I could only legally carry eighteen feet. Even if I owned the longest wheelbase available, I still couldn't carry my twenty-three foot SST. Okay, I said, and thank you.

* * *

The tidal flats at Florence were flooded. Seafowl rested out in the estuary and a great blue heron launched croaking from the reeds. I stopped in town and bought ice, put a can of Tuborg in my water jug with some frozen chunks. Crossing the high cement span near the Siuslaw's mouth I looked down at the spot I once fished with my writing prof and his wife. We were eccentric and naive. I hooked a nice silver salmon trolling a herring behind a Ford fender but Joyce crossed my line with hers as she reeled in. I remember how the silver looked as it leaped, throwing the fender across the water in our wake. Just now under my wheels a red fiberglass dory with a cuddy cabin was trolling through.

A thick fog wall slid south along the beach. A hundred yards inland the air was cool and bright. Several miles south of Florence, driving through a dense undergrowth of rhododendron and young spruce near Cleowax Girl Scout Camp I saw the cop's Pontiac parked on the shoulder under a canopy of maple like some squat white panther made in Detroit.

I stopped at Salmon Harbor below Reedsport. A flock of wild geese, brant, swam among the fishing boats. The parking lot was deserted, the fog line began out at the jetty. I drove slowly past the commercial boats, cruisers and trollers, some double-ended and some rigged with gliderlike steadying sails, colored and triangular. The *Esther Louise*, the *Git A Way*, the *Jan Cherri*, the *Tuna Chaser*, the *Mother Bear*, the *Cee Jay* and the *Wallaby* waited at the dock for the fog to lift.

In Coquille, on Main Street, a lady passed me. She was driving a Toyota Celica with a logger's bumper sticker: *Sierra Club—Kiss My Axe*.

Gold Beach was warmer but gray. A colony of brown pelicans rested on a sand bar near the mouth of the Rouge River. Two ospreys thermalled with the gulls over the parking lot at the rock jetty. One was "singing." I watched them and bought some smoked smelt and a tiny piece of salmon jerky that was selling for $4.30 a pound.

Before I crossed into California I stopped on Cape Sebastian, discovered in 1603 by the Spanish. The pirate Drake had already sailed the Oregon Coast. I smoked a wire-thin number of Columbian weed and watched goldfinches eating thistle seeds. Fog boiled up from the sea and whirled, disappearing in the rotor as it crossed a saddle on the ridge. Leaving that magic, I drove south past Cape Ferello in the settling dusk. The cape looked to have two flyable sides to the beach. I drove a long way in the dark though I was tired, and halted the porkvan on the south fork of the Eel, where I crashed into sleep.

I awoke next morning in redwood forest. After digging a hole for my toilet under some oaks I had breakfast in Laytonville, near the east side of the coastal divide. The rains quit on the high areas. A jungle of redwoods grew on the west side, burnt grass and live oak on the east. I was near wine country, Mendocino County. At eight-thirty I sat in a cafe listening to some rugged collegiate types, hiker-academics, talking about the government, figures, and what they could accomplish. The temperature was already approaching eighty. My face felt tight and sticky. As I went toward the restroom I saw a sign on the wall.

We the unwilling
led by the unqualified
have been doing
the unbelievable
so long with so little
we now attempt
the impossible
with nothing.

I washed my face and arms and walked out to put melted ice water from the cooler into my battery.

I played the stereo as I drove. A phrase in a Dan Fogelberg song appealed to me so much I played it over and over. "Four stars fall every time a lover has to face the truth—far too many stars fell on me . . ." The music and the beauty of the grassy oak-covered hills moved me. Some turkey vultures sat in the top of a big oak watching a hawk soar the hot easterly wind. Holsteins stood in a field near a lumber mill. I stopped to take notes, and a black and white, the California Highway Patrol, slowed, eyeing me. Why did they return to the old image, black and white? They were scary enough with the row of lights and siren lined across the roof.

Near Ukiah I began seeing palms and feathery eucalyptus. The valley broadened among big domed hills, grassy and punctuated with tough live oak. They reminded me of the valley of the Rouge or a Chinese watercolor, hard and wispy at the same time. The highway crossed Pieta Creek and the Russian River. Greg Allman was singing "Midnight Rider." *Ain't gonna let 'em catch the midnight rider...* Listening and watching the Russian I thought of creek names: Scatter Creek, Jumpoff Joe, Louse Creek, Butcherknife, Icebox. And rivers, too: The Long Tom, the Beaverhead, Pistol River, the Umpqua, Siletz, Deschutes, Cowlitz and the Big Hole; all magical and trouty.

The road followed the green Russian through a rocky gorge. There was a restaurant called the Redwood Smorgette, and vineyards, the plants thick and knotted. Haze in the sky began to turn to low clouds and I theorized the valley was connected to the offshore airflow coming into San Francisco. A raccoon lay splattered on the roadside. Even under the low clouds all the trees except eucalyptus appeared sunburned. Or not, as McGuane the novelist used to say. Exasperating, but a universal truth. Or not.

The sun came out at Mission San Rafael. An ambulance passed me bearing a listless woman in back. Was she thinking about dying or the sunshine on the bridge over the Bay? I glimpsed Alcatraz before it was hidden by car lots, apartments and the hills of San Francisco. Once a girl said to me that Marin County was San Francisco's bedroom and I wondered if she meant people commuted or whored there or was it the answer to the question I hadn't asked her yet. San Francisco a mother lion of cities white and hilly by the bay. Blossoming oleander lined the freeway, pink and white, lovely but poisonous. Unfinished freeway tiers ascended into a smoggy nowhere, a road to pie in the sky.

Southern California begins just below San Francisco. Freeways are more crowded, the inland valleys too hot to belong to the north. San Jose was more like L.A. than San Francisco, miles of cement and palm trees. I took the Gilroy to Watsonville cutoff so I could drive the coast highway where it was cooler. Halfway down Monterey Bay I stopped at Moss Landing. People were dropping crab pots off the dock, the water bluegreen under low clouds. A ten mile an hour onshore breeze prompted hundreds of gulls and pelicans to soar the tree line of palms and eucalyptus at the water's edge. They sailed crosswise in single lines and v's. The *Donna* and the *Com-Motion II* were returning from sea, raising their outriggers, their sterns a maze of gurneys, fishwinches. The *Falcon*, a converted cutter I'd seen before in San Diego, headed out, a Boston Whaler hung on its superstructure for a lifeboat. The great smokestacks of the Moss Landing PG&E plant rose above the boats at the dock: The *Larinda*, the *Billie Joann*, the *Why Knot*, the *Saeko*, the *Wild Oat* and the *Sea Horse of Morro Bay*.

Yellow anise was a weed in the fields near Castroville, the artichoke capital of the world. *Thistle Eaters Stop Here*, said a sign on a fruit stand. Between Point Lobos and Point Sur the fog line at last broke from shore and turned out to the southwest on an angle so straight and symmetrical it was like seeing an isobar on a weather map. I drove miles along the cliff highway without seeing a single bird soaring.

The redwood forest was now relegated to a few small stands in gullies on seafacing slopes. Sycamores began to appear in the gully mouths, and the hills were crusted with burnt chapparal. In the afternoon I passed a prison, the California Men's Colony as it said on the sign. Department of Corrections. You can make anything sound better with an abstracted name. Another sign announced Pea Soup Anderson's was only sixty-seven miles ahead.

Late that afternoon a honking wind blew from behind me and I saw the Hearst Castle on the hill a mile away in the trees and sun. The nearby hills appeared wonderfully flyable and forbidden. The Hearsts have had enough trouble but they have too much land. I don't know how much is too much but a student, a Mexican national, once told me her family had to sell off all their land but 100,000 acres. That's all anyone in Mexico can have. Maybe it's only 50,000 acres. How many people in this country and how many acres? *Justicia para todos*, my friend the Hog says. He likes to say it when he gets a big cribbage score. Anyway, now Ronkies are parking their trailers on William Randolph Hearst's beach, shabby campers from Redding and Eau Claire, from Dorena, Oregon and Traverse City, Michigan. To gawk at the castle and be reminded of what can happen in the best of families.

I found myself wondering what happened to a friend, whether he had gone to prison. He'd finished his master's in psychology when he discovered that psychedelics could call up the demons that inhabit us all, that problems which knot up our lives could be recognized on LSD. It was true but he was too serious. He got a twenty-year boozer off whiskey, a young lady off smack. He started to think he was God. He married the lady before she was cured, and she put him through a series of encounters that ultimately cost him his house, his job, his own awareness. I lost touch with him about the time he was to be tried for knocking his wife around. "Our ideals retreat before reality," he said to me once, sadly.

At Morro Bay an oil tanker was anchored near the big rock. The fog came back, not on Sandburg's "little cat feet" but in a brawny line that squatted on the rock and the PG&E stacks next to it, nearly as high as the rock itself. The sun went down, a flattened orb in the mirror of fog.

I read a paper while I ate dinner in Pismo Beach, in a cafe near the arcade and pier. There was a gossip story on the baseball page entitled "Gibson's Disastrous Interview." My father, a scientist, once told me all literature was entertainment. Despite what my teachers tried to do I may be proving him right. I was incensed at the time because I was studying writing in college. When I left the cafe a fat moon was rising. Not quite full, it made me uneasy. I like the moon best as it begins to wane.

I drove in the moonlit darkness toward Guadalupe. The dunes there would be a good place to fly in the morning. I passed some impressive eucalyptus windrows, two-hundred foot trees several rows deep. The paper I'd been reading said there would be strong westerly winds tomorrow. Maybe Guadalupe would be soarable. *Literature is entertainment*. But there must be a way to get down to it somehow. Hemingway thought he knew how to get down to it. So did everybody, probably. I parked by the ocean near Guadalupe and went to sleep in the sound of the surf on the moonflooded beach.

* * *

In the morning it was breezeless and foggy. I went into town for breakfast. An immensely round Mexican waitress wearing lightly rhinestoned glasses took my order. She had the authority of running the place for years. No wheat toast, no breakfast rolls. Okay, white toast. She hung her spectacles around her neck and stepped to the jukebox. Her money produced a sad Spanish song. I ate two poached eggs and the white toast and drove away through cauliflower fields in the fog.

I reached Santa Barbara before noon, in sunny mellow weather. I called Dave Saffold, Blond, studious and not yet twenty, he'd placed second in this year's World Open hang gliding championships in April. We went flying, talking as we drove up the paved, snaky road four fifths of a vertical mile to Lacumbra

Peak. He was depressed, considering a retirement from flying. Too many pilots had been killed, he said, because they were overconfident.

"It's more dangerous than a lot of flyers realize," he added. I asked what he would do if he quit.

"I'm too young to devote my life to one thing," Dave answered. "There's a lot of things I haven't seen. Go to college, maybe."

When we stopped on top a stiff breeze had the American flag standing out on the fire watch tower. But there was another hill, nearly as high, immediately in front of Lacumbra Peak. The launch was a saggy board resting unsteadily on uneven boulders. I declined to fly, and let Dave take Rosy Cheeks, my SST, a much better machine than the old glider Dave had brought. After he was off, circling in front of the launch, I could see the wind wasn't as strong as I'd thought. There wasn't enough to soar. I felt silly about not flying, though I still didn't care for the idea of running off the board. Dave, having milked the mild lift for all it was worth, crossed the other peak and headed off toward the landing area on my white glider with a butterfly painted on its center. In a couple of minutes he was so far away he was a white dot in the sky over Santa Barbara and the ocean.

* * *

That afternoon we went to a small cliff above a nude beach. Dave, on another borrowed SST, soared there briefly, at times standing in the control bar. While I was setting up my glider he landed on top again, though with difficulty, because the wind was dying. Not wanting to pack Rosy up from the beach, I again refused flight. That evening we walked to an absent neighbor's yard and spent a long time in a Jacuzzi. Sea clouds evaporated in the moonlight over us, Dave's depression returned, and as we sat in the hissing water he talked about girls, the cheapness of his high school education, his need for varied experience. Listening to young Dave, I watched the moon in a trance of *déjà vu*. Somehow I'd been there before. I felt old, as though I could be his father. I had little to say.

In the morning I had a powerful urge to leave, though I'd intended to stay in Santa Barbara. But the place was too well-ordered, too expensive and pretty for the bum I felt. I wanted a cheap, kicked-back surrounding to make my stand, to look at my hole card as my friend Kittredge used to say. I wanted my spot soon, so I pointed the porkvan south on the eight lane freeway toward L.A. Small herds of cars exceeding the speed limit passed me in the outside lanes. Sometimes a dozen would go by and then there would be a clear space, a quarter mile of open cement. The herds grew bigger, the spaces between smaller as I neared the city and its poisonous, blue-green and brown haze.

As I drove through L.A. a black and white followed me for several miles. They move through traffic like a roper in a herd of high speed metal cattle, cutting out the sick, the crippled and the ornery while the roll-eyed mass of steel animals tries to move unobtrusively out of the way of the black and white cutting horse. Even the sheriff's cars in L.A. are black and white. Many of the cops drive in pairs, and when they stop you and get out they come up carrying nightsticks and .357 magnums, pistols big enough to stop an elephant or a diesel. I thought of a bumper sticker I'd seen in Montana. *I'd Rather Be A Roper Than A Doper.* When the cop got off my tail I lit a defiant joint.

That was how I came to Escape Country, a private park, the remnants of a cattle ranch in the foothills of the Santa Anas near El Toro. I walked into his office and shook hands with the owner, Jim Robinson. He'd built a lake since I'd been there last, and was finishing what he said would be the world's largest skateboard track, not far from the entrance gate. That afternoon I at last went flying again, in mild southern California air. I saw the sun go down over the Pacific from the hilltop. I flew every day for the next few days and camped with my friend Debrek in his school bus. Summer vacation was finished, and when her son David had to return to high school in town, a very kind lady named Mary lent me her little Kenskill camping trailer to stay in while I worked on a book. The Kenskill is parked next to the hangar at the landing area. When the spectators and flyers go home there's no one else around, just the new lake, the brushy hills and the coyotes. A great horned owl perches on a eucalyptus snag across the road, and when the moon is low I see him silhouetted up there, swiveling his outsized head, looking for mice at the edge of the nursery where Mexican laborers work by day. It won't last forever, but it's all right with me.

Vladimir Nabokov
1899-1977
"*. . . the relief of getting rid of oneself, before going on to better things.*"

2. Big Black and Torrey Circus

The UFO (Ultralight Flyer's Organization) of San Diego threw a party the weekend before Thanksgiving. Burke Ewing and I went to the fly-in. We drove onto the ranch at the foot of Big Black Mountain Saturday morning, entering a pastoral valley of healthy pastures and huge shade trees, oaks, and gullies filled with willows and sycamores. The steep hillsides bordering the pastures were granite out-croppings covered with chapparal. At least a hundred people were already there enjoying the sunshine, and more cars pulled in loaded with gliders, pilots and their families.

Whenever Burke appears on a glider scene people want his attention. His elfin charisma and awesome pilot skills are enough to attract the everyday skyfolk, but his abilities as a builder, designer and, perhaps oddly, as musician-songwriter are things that summon the élite, the people who make it happen in hang gliding. The site reeked of big names, but the competition level was low and the atmosphere preparatory for fun flying, a cow feed and hoo-haw. We enlisted Burke Ewing Sr. as driver, borrowed a six-man pickup and headed for the top, three thousand feet skyward.

A cloud line moved rapidly down the mountain range as we drove forty-five minutes up an eroded forest service track. The sunshine left, shoved aside by a layer of gloomy stratus clouds. The temperature was in the low fifties when we reached the launch. Pilots were putting on jackets and blowing on their hands. The wind was blowing up the hill, but it was light and uneven, offering little possibility for soaring. Burke made his first flight of the day as I walked about the launch area, talking to pilots and keeping a nervous eye on the weather. I wanted no sudden big wind to confront me on the way down.

As the others flew, I set my glider up. It was new to me, and if it hadn't been flight-tested by friends at the Wills shop I wouldn't have gone to such a big hill for my maiden flight with it. The new glider had a strange color arrangement, green and blue and gold and white, but everything looked in place, so after concluding my procrastination by observing that no one flying was getting bumped around, I flew it.

The flight was boss, as they say. You have to run fast to get off from Big Black because the take off is shallow and there are bushes to catch you if you blow the launch. I had a four mile breeze and no problem launching, and right off I got lift that took me back up to starting level. I made some passes a hundred yards out and then went down the ridge. Bob Wills calls a glide down a sled ride. I like sled rides from big hills. My sled ride, fifteen or twenty minutes long, took me through smooth air with small patches of lift and smaller ones of sink, and I landed on the target if not the bullseye. For that time I had what only flying can offer; a hawk's-eye view of the mountains, the valley and sunshine over the ocean far to the west.

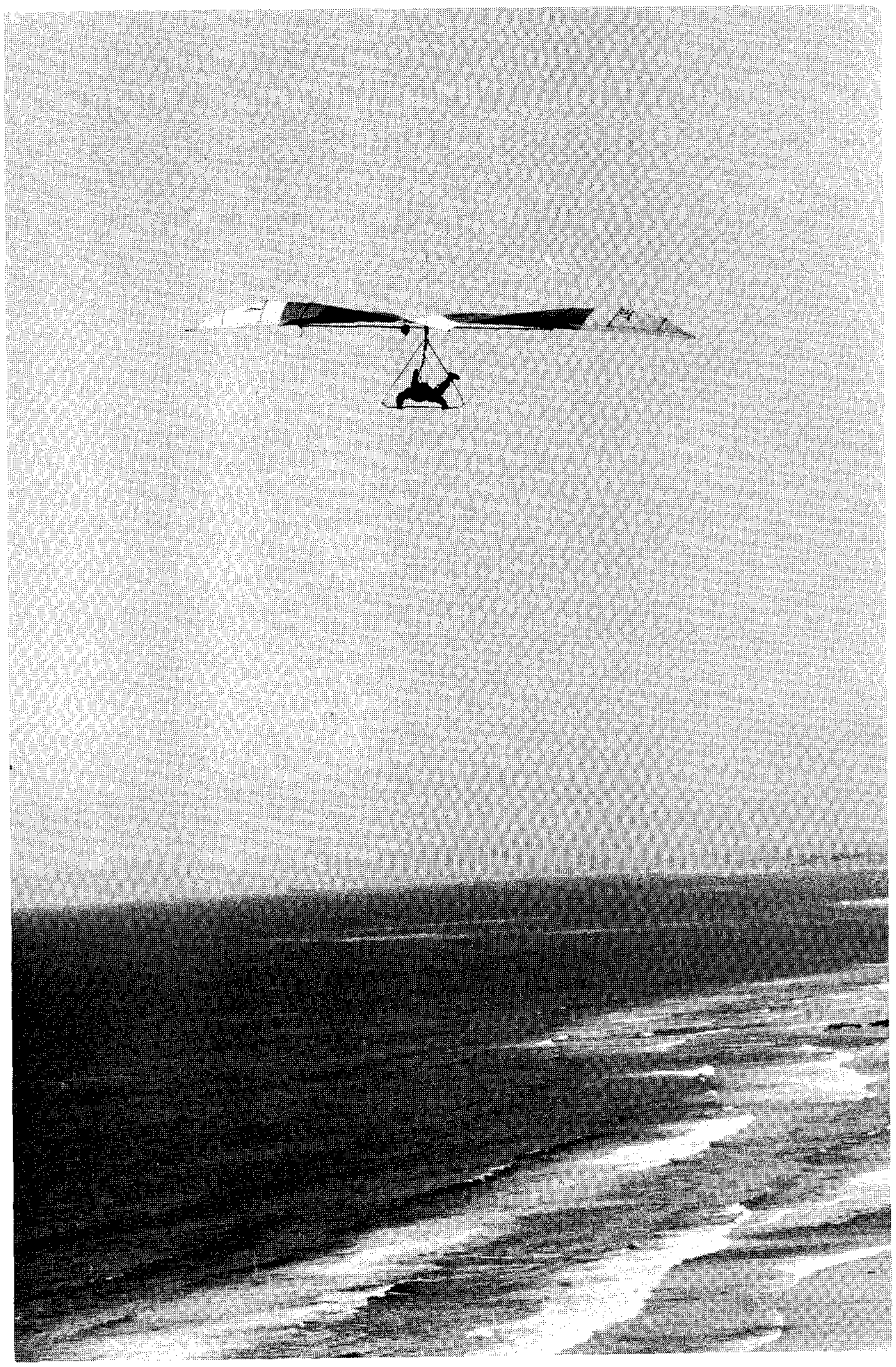
All day a hundred or more gliders paraded off Big Black. That much looking up virtually guarantees a sore neck for the novice spectator. Strange and intriguing machines appeared from behind the ridge, prototype gliders with names like Sensor, Phoenix VIII, Crow, Heron, and new kites like Chris Price's 110-P and Bob Will's XC with bird-like wingtips and novel wing wire arrangement for shifting uneven wing loads. It worked, something like power steering for a hang glider.

A weak sun returned near dusk. The air warmed but the wind died. We took our last sled rides and rolled up our gliders. It was cold and dark when we got to the ranch house to turn our three dollar tickets into cow meat, but the yard behind the house was crowded with a couple hundred glider people, and there were bonfires, kegs of beer, and four hundred pounds of cow, cooked underground in fifty pound burlap-wrapped chunks. We bloated on cow and beer, listened as Burke and others played guitar and fiddle. I milled in the crowd, talking to people I hadn't seen for some time, and then went home with Burke to his place in San Diego. The party went all night, they said, and all the cow got et.

I was so tired I didn't even wash. In the morning I looked at my gray hands, soaped off the aluminium oxide. Through the bay window of the La Jolla home Burke was then staying in I could see the ocean, and what looked like wind lines approaching across the metallic water. Waking Burke, I took him to the window.

"That's what it is," he said happily. It's going to *happen*."

We shined on Big Black and drove the short distance from La Jolla to the cliffs at Torrey Pines. The morning was sunny, patchy clouds were coming in from the ocean, and though only a five mile breeze was striking the cliff we could see the hair-like wind lines a half-mile out. Burke and I set up our gliders as other flyers arrived. As we finished the wind picked up to a soarable fifteen miles an hour, right at the cliff. It made me feel like a crap shooter on a hot streak. By now twenty more gliders were nearly set up. Torrey Pines is a holy place for flying, and the local flyers have wind radar or some sort of early warning. When Torrey's soarable, pilots appear as though by magic.



The magic was in the wind, which blew directly at the cliff, eighteen to twenty-two miles an hour, all day long. Soon the whole hundred gliders from Big Black were there, as many as thirty in the air at once, soaring above the cliff. Burke tuned his glider, making several short flights over the north face, and I made a fifteen minute flight there myself, landing on top for the first time. It was easy, I discovered. You just go like hell downwind, through the window where the radio-controlled model gliders fly, and turn around into the stiff headwind, setting down on the hill's wide crown. It might be a little bumpy, but under good conditions like we had that day there's no serious rotor. And what fun to land where you took off, after staying up as long as you want.

Burke was besieged by requests for tandem flights. He took a little girl, two big girls, a young man and then Burke's dog Curtis on short tandem flights of five to fifteen minutes. Every time Burke was ready to launch with a new co-pilot the spectators would swarm the cliff's edge by the launch, to photograph the take off and the eye-pleasing butterfly SST he was flying. I helped Burke with a few wire launches and then got help for myself, and took my first hour-long flight.

I spent much of that time flying over the south end of the cliffs, down by the Scripps Pier, where it wasn't crowded. For ten minutes I attempted to hover next to a small hawk, over a gulley near an apartment house. The hawk was looking down at something. He paid me little attention as long as I remained a few yards away. I found hovering difficult. I kept sliding over on one wing. The hawk, however, merely flicked his tail for corrections, maintaining a perfect station. I flew out over the beach, watching a herd of dolphins just outside the surf line, and the nudes on Black's Beach. From five hundred feet you can't see anything on people except a little dark patch. Sex is hard to determine but for the most obvious cases. Some of the sunbathers waved. The air was so smooth I felt safe to wave back, even to rest my chin on the bar and steer that way briefly. But the borrowed helmet I was wearing wore on my neck muscles, and after what I judged to be an hour's air time I crabbed a little over a mile back to the launch and landed behind it.

I rested and watched til near dark. Burke made a total of twelve flights that Sunday. Five were tandem flights, two prone and three seated. I admired his stamina. I flew once more, just before sunset. I self-launched, and the nose leaped up as I dove for the bar, flying up and out in a kind of speed-elevator dream. Maneuvering on the north face with five other gliders, I wanted to watch the sun going down in clouds over the ocean, but I became leery of landing in the dark and went down early. There was mild turbulence in the landing area, and I had a tense moment stalled six feet off the ground, but the wind saved me and I got down on two feet and a wingtip for a safe if unpretty landing.

Burke and I hung around for a couple of hours after dark, smoking and talking with Dave Muhl and Dave Beardslee. Two rogallos and a Sundance wing flew in the blackness above the cliffs, wearing little warning lights. They seemed unreal, swooshing back and forth out there. All I could see of Herb Fenner's wing were two little green lights on the tips and a red one on the kingpost. Last to come down, Herb landed safely at the cliff's edge. He carried his wing stiffly, smiling and shivering from the cold.

On the way home, Burke told me a story. It was about how he'd learned to turn, during his second day of flying. He said he realized the neccessity of perfecting that maneuver coming off the hill at San Clemente, when he confronted a twenty foot oak. There was a picnic going on beneath. Burke stuck it in the tree, scattering the picnickers.

"How'd you get out?" I asked him.

"It wasn't like today," he said. "I climbed out like a monkey."

What's Coming Down: An Afterthought

When I first began watching the flyers in Tucson, the kites they piloted would barely make it to the target at A Mountain's foot. Those old standards had a glide angle of about four to one, measured optimistically. They were more like steerable parachutes than gliders. Most made a lot of flapping noise and were slow to respond, difficult to control. Some wouldn't recover from a steep dive.

Two or three years ago there weren't many hang glider pilots. Often they fancied themselves daredevils, stunting without helmets or even harnesses to show off. Others seemed to feel themselves élite just because they could fly. A famous pilot once told me that in his early days of flying he'd purposely flown into a cloud from a fifteen hundred foot hill, with no harness. He'd eaten some acid and thought it would be an adventure. He was lucky not to have ended his trip forever.

Things have changed. Perhaps fifty thousand people now know how to fly a rogallo wing, and glider design has advanced astoundingly. The newest rogallos have a glide angle and sink rate that approaches a trainer sailplane's, and foot-launched rogallos have reached altitudes of 19,000 feet and have flown as much as 100 miles cross-country. Two years ago a five minute flight from A Mountain drew cheers from the spectators. Now an hour-long soaring stint is ho-hum. I've seen streakers on hang gliders, pictures of loops and of six men on one machine. I've met a couple dozen female pilots, a seventy four year old man and a twelve year old girl who could fly. And Curtis, Burke Ewing's thirteen year old dog. Curtis has perhaps a hundred hours of soaring time with his master, more than most human pilots. If he doesn't get to go with Burke, Curtis becomes irate, barking and getting in the way of launches. He makes a nuisance of himself until he's jailed in the car.

I think the attitude of most pilots has changed. Instead of feeling élite and superior and careless because they know how to do something other people can't, most flyers now use helmets and two sets of safety loops to hold themselves in their gliders. Most refrain from flying dangerous or forbidden places, and are generous with assistance and advice to newcomers. The brotherhood has expanded its compassion with its numbers.

Nevertheless, there remain millions of people who've not yet seen a hang glider flying. They know something's going on, but they're not sure man was meant to fly. "I'd never do *that*," they say. "It's too dangerous." And so far the press has been little help, reporting the goriest and most bizarre accidents, not records or the beauty and fun of flying. *Sport Death*, the press says. *Death Tournament*. The FAA threatens to bring government intervention to a sport that grew in part from a need to get away from structure and restriction.

There *have* been injuries and deaths, too many of them. Nearly always they are the result of pilot error. Two good friends of mine are dead because they didn't maintain or assemble their equipment properly. If you don't take care of your gilder it can't take care of you. Other pilots have hurt themselves trying to do things they weren't prepared or experienced enough to do, or things the conditions wouldn't allow. A hang glider's proverb, borrowed from airplane school, says, "Keep up thine airspeed lest the ground rise up and smite thee."

I believe ninety-eight per cent of all flying accidents are caused by pilot error. Such accidents don't have to happen, and they may happen less frequently as we become better informed, as we learn more about flying and the air we fly in. DaVinci would have given his eyeteeth to do what we can do on a hang glider. So would anyone who ever watched a hawk with envy. Now that is a real possibility. Anyone can fly, anyone who can run down a hill or ride a bicycle or do a pullup or walk on a rail. And if you know what you're doing, if you think about it beforehand, flying can be done in joy and safety. Flying is part of a journey that goes to a place called human destiny. That journey's road goes up and outward and always changes. Maybe it's an illusion, maybe there's no end, maybe it doesn't matter. We go anyway. —*William A. Roecker*

There's a Fast Breeder in Your Future

1. Decisions to Cancel

Thursday, July 21, the AP wire service reported a joint House-Senate conference committee had accepted President Carter's decision to cancel construction of the prototype commercial fast breeder reactor to be built on the Clinch River in Tennessee. This act completed Congressional approval of the President's new nuclear energy policy announced the previous April. President Carter announced at that time that he would not approve the use of plutonium fuel in commercial atomic power plants, and recommended that no further funds be appropriated to complete the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant being built at Barnwell, South Carolina.

It might appear, therefore, that the commercial breeder reactor is dead. It seems to have gone the way of those other monuments to supposedly gross and inhumane technology, the supersonic transport and the B-1 bomber. Or has it?

The French completed their prototype fast breeder reactor about three years ago, and after some initial testing, ran it continuously for a year at full power without difficulty. They named the prototype *Phoenix*, presumably because of its ability to create new nuclear fuel out of the ashes of old. But the name could as well apply to the American breeder reactor program. The currently planned commercial fast breeder has been killed, but the breeder will rise again in new form like the original Phoenix bird—to the consternation of those who perceive the breeder reactor program as a moral failure rather than a technological and social necessity.

The judgment that the breeder reactor is an inescapable technological and social necessity may seem improbable in the light of the President's decision to cancel the Clinch River Breeder and the acceptance of that decision by Congress. But a close reading of President Carter's energy policy shows that he recommends a *delay* in the move to breeders and fuel reprocessing, rather than an outright ban on them. Robert Fri, acting head of the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), told a recent convention of electrical engineers:

> We have not cancelled the breeder program, but rather [we have] broadened and deepened it. We are forging a nuclear program on a broader base of understanding . . . and support than ever before . . . . Whatever the outcome of the current nuclear controversy, I believe the resulting program will be built on a more solid foundation than we have seen for a long time—at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

It might be useful, amid the current uproar over the cancellation of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor, to review the reasons why the move to breeder reactors and fuel reprocessing is an inevitability which can be delayed, but which cannot be altogether avoided.

2. Breeder Reactors as Antidote to Collapse

Many contemporary futurists see the next quarter of a century as a time of increasing scarcity, economic stagnation, and, finally, of the collapse of industrial civilization as we have known it. (See for example, Vacca, *The Coming Dark Age;* Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect;* Slater, *Earthwalk;* Meadows, *et al., The Limits to Growth*.) From this pessimistic perspective the great economic prosperity engendered by the industrial revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries is a mere bubble in the larger processes of history. This bubble is about to burst, and to reduce us all to that ruder form of existence which has been the lot of man through most of his experience.

The reason this history of rapid industrial expansion is now perceived to be a bubble about to burst, is that our entire industrial economy is built on the consumption of non-renewable resources which, being finite, are about to run out. (They will not *literally* run out, but the projections indicate a number of key resources will soon become so scarce and expensive as to be inaccessible for most practical purposes.) The most obvious of these is petroleum, which quadrupled in price in a matter of weeks in 1973. It may not be available at any price, in the quantities necessary to sustain economic growth, beyond 1983-1987. The end of the world (as we have known it) looms a mere seven years down the road.

There is, apparently, one way this projected Malthusian collapse of industrial civilization can be avoided. We must find a new source of energy not so limited as petroleum and natural gas. If we have enough energy, other sorts of shortages will be manageable. With sufficient energy we can construct plastic and ceramic building materials out of sand, and we can synthesize artificial fuels out of the atmosphere and the oceans. Without abundant energy we have no choice but to sit home and helplessly watch our world crumble about us.

The binding energy of the nucleus of the atom is the only known source of available energy that is for practical purposes inexhaustible. The sources of this sort of energy can be represented in the following way: Imagine lining up samples of all the 100 or so elements in a row according to weight, with the light gases hydrogen and helium at one end, and the heavy metals uranium and plutonium at the other. Now imagine that you post a clothesline pole at each end of this row, and that you hang a slack line between the two poles. The sag in the rope would then represent the so-called "curve of binding energy," expressing the energy in the nucleus that is available for use. This energy is highest at the two ends and lowest (zero) near the middle. The elements near the center of the line-up may be constructed in one of two ways. The light elements can be fused into heavier conglomerates, or the heavy elements can be broken up into lighter components. If you then weigh the results of such fusings or fissionings, you will find they weigh less than the materials from which they were produced. This difference in mass is the binding energy of the nucleus which has been released in the process, expressed by Einstein's well known conservation law, $E=mc^2$ (the energy released "E" is equal to the mass difference "m" times the speed of light "c" squared).

Another simile may be helpful. Think of the curve of binding energy as representing a valley between two hills. Medium weight elements are like rocks lying on the valley floor. Light elements are like rocks perched high up on one hillside and heavy elements are like rocks high up on the other hillside. Fusing light elements or fissioning heavy elements is like rolling rocks down these hills. It releases potential energy.

These pictures need only two modifications to make them sufficiently accurate for my purposes here. One modification concerns the sag in the rope or the shape of the valley. It is not symmetrical; it falls off more steeply at the light element end than at the heavy element end. This means there is more energy to be obtained from fusing two hydrogen nuclei than from fissioning one uranium nucleus. The second modification is necessary to represent the fact that these two processes are not equally easy to perform. Hydrogen atoms can only be fused by physically pressing them together. Since the nuclei of all atoms are positively charged, they repel one another very strongly as they come close together. No one presently knows how to generate the astronomical pressures and densities necessary to fuse hydrogen atoms in a controlled way that releases more energy than the process consumes. In other words, the rocks perched high on the hill at the light element end of the series have a steep cliff to fall down to the valley floor below, but they are stuck so solidly in place that it is currently impossible to break them loose. The rocks on the heavy element end of the series rest on a much gentler slope; once underway, they do not roll nearly so far or so fast, but they are much easier to break loose and start rolling toward the valley floor.

Certain heavy elements are easily split because of a gift from Mother Nature. In addition to the positively charged particles in the nucleus called "protons," there are particles about the size of protons which have no charge at all, and hence are called "neutrons." These neutrons can slip right into the nucleus of an atom and fuse with it with almost no expenditure of energy. There are three heavy isotopes, uranium-233, uranium-235, and plutonium-239, which are made unstable when they absorb a neutron. They then spontaneously split, yielding lighter fragments, lots of free energy, and *two or more new neutrons*. If such fissionable material is arranged in a sufficiently compact mass, these new neutrons will cause further splits to occur, releasing yet more energy and new neutrons. The explosion of the Hiroshima atomic bomb was caused by such a "chain bomb reaction" in a compact mass of uranium-235. The Nagasaki atomic bomb was caused by such a chain reaction in a compact mass of plutonium-239. Current American power reactors mainly run on the controlled fissioning of U-235.

The good news is that these three isotopes of heavy elements can be easily fissioned and are therefore a potential source of the energy needed to keep our industrial machine running. The bad news is that only one of these isotopes occurs in nature, and it is comparatively rare. U-235 constitutes only 0.7% of natural uranium. The rest is mainly U-238, which is *not* fissionable in a way that produces a surplus of neutrons to support a chain reaction. Hence the supply of U-235 for our commercial light water reactors will probably run out a short time after our oil and natural gas do. The present-day commercial light water reactors, fueled with U-235, provide no long-term solution to our energy problems.

But two abundant non-fissionable elements do exist which can be converted into fissionable materials by those surplus neutrons released by the fissioning of U-235. These "fertile" elements are thorium-232 and uranium-238. Thorium converts into the fissionable isotope uranium-233, and uranium-238 converts into the equally fissionable isotope plutonium-239. Both these latter isotopes can support a chain reaction in a power reactor. So as long as these fertile elements hold out, we can continue to produce atomic energy for industrial use.

How much thorium and uranium-238 exist in nature? No one knows for sure, but both are quite plentiful. Either or both isotopes exist in small but significant amounts in all igneous and volcanic rocks, such as ordinary granite and basalt. The American atomic scientist Alvin Weinberg once calculated that a rock mining operation no larger than the then-current coal mining operations (*circa* 1960), would yield enough fertile thorium and uranium to sustain a rate of energy consumption 40 times higher than the current levels for hundreds of thousands of years. (The currently popular estimate of the longevity of economically accessible supplies is a round one million years.) Weinberg concluded that even if it proves impossible to burn the seas (or, rather, the hydrogen in sea water) in fusion reactors, we already know we can burn the rocks in breeder reactors and thereby avoid the dead end predicted by the doom-sayers.

This whole optimistic scenario depends on the reprocessing of spent fuel elements from reactors, to separate out the newly created fissionable material from the fertile materials in which they are embedded. Without the reprocessing and burning of uranium-233 or plutonium, the entire atomic fission option will come to an end in a matter of decades. This fact is more salient to the Germans, Japanese, English, and French than it is to us, for we have comparatively abundant reserves of inexpensive uranium-235, which they do not. The current consensus of educated opinion in Europe is that a breeder reactor economy based in large measure on reprocessed and recycled plutonium is the only hope they have for attaining energy independence in this century. (This point is cogently argued by W. Häfele in the April 19, 1974, issue of *Science*.) These European nations and Japan are, therefore, pushing the development of breeder reactor technology much harder than we are. France, Germany, and England are currently about ten years ahead of our timetable for developing commercial breeder reactors (a timetable which has, of course, been even further delayed by President Carter's decision to cancel the prototype Clinch River Breeder Reactor).

That is the hope which breeder reactors and fuel reprocessing hold out—abundant high-grade electrical and mechanical energy, at about today's prices, for about a million more years. Without such abundant and comparatively cheap energy, we face a future of shortages, inflation, economic stagnation, and perhaps the complete collapse of modern industrial societies.

3. Alternatives

Is there any other way of avoiding such an unhappy fate? There appear to be but three alternatives to the breeder reactor economy; fusion power, expanded use of coal and oil reserves, and solar energy. Let us examine them.

1. Fusion power

Fusion power taps the binding energy of the atomic nucleus at the other end of the list of elements. Two hydrogen nuclei are fused to yield a helium nucleus that weighs less than the sum of its parts. This mass difference is made up by an energy release in accordance with Einstein's conservation law, $E=mc^2$. As noted above, the task of pressing the hydrogen nuclei together against the force of their common positive charges is a difficult one. The stringent conditions of pressure and temperature necessary to initiate such a fusion reaction can only occur in nature deep within the body of a massive star, such as our sun. (Solar energy is the direct product of such steady state fusion reactions in the sun.)

At the present time the only way such conditions of pressure and temperature can be realized on earth is by means of an atomic bomb. The hydrogen bomb consists of a mass of hydrogen (perhaps made solid in the form of anhydrous ammonia) packed around a fission bomb warhead. The fireball of the atomic bomb explosion provides the "match" to ignite the hydrogen bomb.

The problem of commercial fusion power production is how to realize the necessary conditions of pressure and temperature in some way less drastic and hazardous than shooting off atomic bombs. A thirty year cooperative effort by Russia, England, and the United States has not yet produced a machine which can generate a surplus of fusion energy beyond that needed to keep the machine operating. There is not much doubt today that such a machine *can* be built, if we invest the necessary billions of dollars in development funds. What is far from certain, however, is whether such a fusion reactor can ever be "economic." We do not know whether we can build a fusion reactor that will produce a surplus of energy at about today's level of energy costs.

There is one bright spot on the fusion reactor horizon. The fusion fuel cycle with the lowest ignition temperature and the greatest energy gain is the so-called "D-T" cycle, in which a heavy hydrogen isotope called "duterium" reacts with another heavy hydrogen isotope called "tritium." The D-T reaction is unique among the fusion reactions in that most of its energy is released in the form of energetic neutrons, rather than as light and heat. (The recently proposed "neutron bomb" being debated in congress is a D-T hydrogen bomb that is ignited by a very small fission-bomb detonator.) These energetic neutrons can be used to heat water to make steam to turn a turbine as is done in conventional light water fission reactors. Such a device would, however, probably not be economically viable. If these energetic neutrons were used instead to breed uranium-233 or plutonium from thorium or uranium-238 which can then be burned in light water reactors, the entire system would pretty certainly be highly profitable. Such a hybrid fusion-fission economy would not really be very different from a pure fission breeder economy, for both would involve the reprocessing and recycling of large amounts of fissionable uranium and plutonium. It would be quite accurate to view the pure fission breeder economy and the hybrid fusion-fission economy as slightly different forms of the same option based on the same sorts of fuel processes and capabilities. The advantages and hazards would be quite similar for both. The main difference is that the technology of the fission breeder is already basically in hand, while the hypothetical fusion reactor involves many technological capabilities that have yet to be demonstrated and perfected.

2. Coal and Shale Oil

Coal and shale oil are obvious alternatives to our current petroleum energy economy. The shale and other nonstandard oil deposits such as tar sands are going to become more attractive as the price of crude oil rises in the years ahead. But we must remember that our situation can be redeemed only if we can find large quantities of energy at something like today's prices. Plentiful oil at triple or quadruple current costs would have the same sort of deleterious economic consequences as would a sharp cut in the available supplies. Current projections indicate that shale and other unusual oil deposits which are economically accessible are probably not large enough to prevent the Malthusian stagnation and collapse we are facing in the next fifteen years. Coal is plentiful in this country; there may be enough at something like today's prices to last for more than a century. But the massive burning of coal produces so much environmental degradation that it may be considerably more hazardous to human life than is atomic power.

We all know about the particulate emissions of coal burning power plants. Such plants also spew forth various oxides of sulphur and nitrogen, as well as sundry complex hydrocarbon products. This pollution is definitely hazardous to human life. Actuarial studies of deaths due to respiratory illnesses indicate that hundreds of persons die each year because of the pollution generated by coal burning power plants. If we take *all* the deaths associated with coal mining and plant construction into account, a recent study indicates that about 600 deaths a year are attributable to the activities involved in the production of electricity from coal. By way of comparison, a study by David Rose of MIT indicates that a nuclear electrical generating operation of the same magnitude would produce on the average about 11 deaths per year.

The problem of particulate and chemical air pollution generated by coal burning power plants is widely appreciated. What is not so well known is that coal burning power plants give off radioactivity. Decayed vegetable matter has often acted throughout the geological ages to filtrate and concentrate uranium compounds. Consequently, most coal contains some uranium, and much of it contains considerably more uranium than does the typical igneous rock. (Some lignite deposits in North Dakota contain so much uranium that it has been seriously proposed that these deposits be mined for their uranium as well as for their carbon and hydrocarbon contents.) When such coal is burned, some of the radioactive material it contains is released into the atmosphere. That is why coal burning power plants typically give off as much radioactivity as does a modern commercial atomic power plant.

Finally, the massive burning of coal over a number of decades may produce drastic changes in the weather, which may prove to be just as disruptive to the stability of our industrial economy as would the escalating costs and shortfalls of a petroleum economy. By a curious coincidence, on Friday, July 22, the day after the joint House-Senate committee voted to accept President Carter's recommendation to drop the Clinch River Breeder Reactor, a news conference was called in Washington to announce the results of a 2½-year study of the climatic effects of continued reliance on the burning of coal and oil for industrial energy. The study was sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences and was conducted by the nation's foremost experts on climate and geophysics. The investigators concluded that the "greenhouse effect" of the carbon dioxide generated by such combustion would raise the world's average temperature by more than 11 degrees over the next two centuries. This warming trend would have "adverse, perhaps even catastrophic" effects which will begin to be noticeable about fifty years from now. These include a shift of the corn belt north to Canada and Siberia and the flooding of coastal cities due to the melting of the arctic ice caps. The investigators recommended a massive effort over the next couple of decades to find a new energy source which could substitute for fossil fuels. The report did not endorse any specific alternative to fossil fuels.

3. Solar Energy

Lastly, let us consider that great white hope of those who oppose breeder reactors and plutonium recycling—solar energy. This is an important, underexploited source of energy which should be developed as quickly as possible. But is it realistic to suppose that energy from this source could provide a *substitute* for the sort of energy to be derived from breeder reactors? Unfortunately, most studies of these prospects answer that question in the negative.

There is enormous energy contained in the solar radiation falling on the surface of the earth. But it is too diffuse to be of much use in most contexts. Solar energy *can* provide a large part of the low temperature heat needed to warm our bath water and heat our living spaces, but even this simple application of solar energy is currently more expensive than most fossil fuel systems. Even if all new houses were built with solar heating the really big problems of the energy crisis would not be touched. Our problem is to provide enough high grade, high temperature energy, at low enough costs, to sustain our large mining, manufacturing, and transportation systems. Solar energy is not currently practical for these purposes, and the evidence indicates it will not be practical for these purposes in your lifetime and mine.

There are a number of considerations which together indicate that solar energy cannot provide a way out of our difficulties. First, it is generally not the case that there are large tracts of empty land near our population centers which can be used to collect and fix solar energy in useable form. Most of our arable land is already committed to the utilization of solar energy in the form of food and fiber production. Even the oceans are performing this function. Photosynthesis by plants near the surface of the ocean cleanses our atmosphere of much of its carbon dioxide and replenishes our supply of fresh oxygen. That leaves non-arable land and special exceptions such as the roofs of houses and places of business as the only sort of space not already committed to the utilization of solar energy.

In our country the non-arable land consists mainly of the great deserts of the Southwest. The solar energy falling on this area constitutes a large untapped energy source. But how much would it cost to build an apparatus which could collect and fix this energy in useable form? The answer to this question is pretty well known, for the ERDA has already let some contracts for work on an experimental 10-megawatt solar electric generating plant to be built near Barstow, California. The location in the Calico Mountains just south of the Mojave desert is ideal for a solar energy facility. Theoretical studies indicate the physical processes utilized by this plant are about as efficient as any solar electric plant can possibly be. The projected cost will be somewhere above $10,000 per kilowatt of generating capacity. Current atomic power plants cost about $500 per kilowatt of generating capacity.

The astronomical cost of the Barstow facility is partly attributable to the fact that it is an experimental prototype. Economies of mass production are supposed to bring the costs down to about $2500 per installed kilowatt. It is unlikely that the cost will ever fall much below this figure, and even this estimate might prove to be unrealistically low, for it is derived in part by assuming the solar collectors can be manufactured and installed for less than $5 per square foot. That is about what it would cost to replace so simple a structure as the roof on your house. The inescapable conclusion is that electricity from solar energy will cost more than five times as much as electricity from atomic power plants.

That is what concentrated high grade solar energy will cost on site in the sunny deserts of the Southwest. How could this energy be transported from the deserts, where people are few and industries are fewer, to the cold and cloudy industrial Northeast where it is needed? There are several possible ways, but one probably could do no better than to use this concentrated energy to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. These two gases could then be pumped in parallel pipelines to the Northeast, and could be recombined there in fuel cells to generate electricity. Basic physical laws limit the efficiency of both steps in this process (both the splitting and the recombining of the hydrogen and oxygen) to about 50%. That means electricity produced from solar energy in the Southwest and delivered on a wintry day in the Northeast would probably cost 20 times what it costs to produce electricity from an atomic power plant. Clearly, the all-solar energy economy does not provide an alternative to the problems of escalating energy costs, and the resulting economic stagnation and collapse we are trying to avoid.

4. Delaying the Breeder

If the breeder reactor economy—or something like it—is inevitable, why was the President persuaded not to allow fuel reprocessing at this time and to recommend cancellation of the Clinch River reactor? The reasons given by the President closely follow the recommendations of a recent study of the issue sponsored by the Ford Foundation and administered by the MITRE Corporation. (The full text of the study has just been published by the Ballinger Company under the title *Nuclear Power: Issues and Choices*.)

1. *Reprocessing is Currently Marginally Economic*

In the U.S., at least, there is no immediate danger of running out of uranium-235 for light water reactors. Recent improvements in the efficiency of the process by which U-235 is separated from U-238 have further extended our comparatively inexpensive supplies of U-235. It is doubtful that investment in large reprocessing plants would be economical so long as uranium ore is as cheap as it is in this country at the present time.

2. *Once-through Cycles Can Be Made More Efficient.*

There are a number of comparatively modest and inexpensive modifications to be made in present-day reactor technology to improve its efficiency. These modifications can stretch the amount of energy we extract from a pound of uranium ore by a factor of three or four without going to reprocessing and recycling. (Fast breeders, by way of contrast, would increase the energy extracted from a pound of uranium by as much as 100 times.) One could, for example, burn the spent fuel elements from light water reactors in Canadian-style heavy water reactors. The waste products of this tandem burn would be sufficiently depleted not to be worth reprocessing. It is possible to build water moderated reactors that use both light and heavy water within the same machine. By changing the ratio of heavy to light water used to moderate neutrons during the burn-up period, one can attain as high a burn-up rate as one gets from a tandem cycle, without having to ship the fuel rods between the light and heavy water power plants. Such tandem and combined cycles would approach the break-even point of fuel generation, and hence are called "near breeders."

3. *Homogeneous Reactors Need to be Developed*

There are breeder reactor concepts which have not yet been developed, which combine the breeding, reprocessing, and burning functions within a single enclosed machine. The fuel in such a reactor is not encased in metal rods as it is in today's reactors. It is, rather, suspended in a homogeneous medium such as a gas, liquid metal, or molten salt. It is circulated continuously through the core where it is burned, and through a purifying system where the fission products are continuously removed. Such a homogeneous reactor could be designed so that no fissionable material ever left the reactor after it started up and any diversion of materials from the reactor would quickly shut it down. It would even be possible to recycle the non-fissionable radioactive wastes through the core of such a reactor until they would be nearly completely inert. Such recycled wastes would be dangerous for decades rather than for centuries, so this technical innovation would go a long way toward solving the waste disposal problem. These ideas need five to ten years of further development before we can be sure they will work and will be economically competitive with the currently planned liquid metal fast breeder reactors.

4. The Problem of Proliferation

The most important reason for delaying plutonium recycling is political, not technical. France and West Germany were about to sell complete reprocessing plants to Brazil and Pakistan. The example set by President Carter puts political pressure on these exporting countries to do more than they have to build legal safeguards against diversion of plutonium from such plants for weapons fabrication. An international conference on this problem will be held later this year; one important motive for the President's decision was to orient the political climate of that conference away from purely nationally based nuclear power systems.

What is not widely appreciated about this problem is that proliferation is already out of control, and has been for some time. We lost the ability to prevent other nations from acquiring atomic weapons over 20 years ago when President Eisenhower proposed, and Congress approved, the so-called "Atoms for Peace" program. We then simply gave away all our important atomic secrets. Our allies Great Britain and Canada followed suit, with the bewildered Russians tagging along somewhere behind. (The policy has been criticized for some time on precisely the ground that it would make proliferation control more difficult. See for example Leonard Beaton's *Must the Bomb Spread?* [1966].) Today the information necessary to extract weapons-grade plutonium from irradiated uranium is available in the open literature. Any person with $55.00 and a postage stamp can send to the Gordon and Breach Publishing Company in New York City, and obtain a copy of the two volume *Plutonium Handbook*, which contains the necessary information for such a project.

Not only did we give away our information, we gave away the technical training and much of the requisite equipment for such plutonium production projects. We trained scientists and engineers from around the world in our universities and laboratories. We gave away small research reactors to a number of countries, including India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Venezuela, the Philippines, and South Korea. The plutonium for India's atomic bomb was generated in a research reactor supplied by Canada and made operable with heavy water supplied by the United States.

The result of this 22 year old program of American largesse has been summarized in a 1976 monograph prepared by Greenwood, Rathjens, and Ruina for the Institute for Strategic Studies of London. These authors concluded that for about 10-25 million dollars, and in 3-7 years time, any nation on earth with the indigenous engineering expertise required, say, to build a small oil refinery could also build and operate a complete atomic weapons system. The only remaining barriers to proliferation are political, not technical. The one remaining safeguard available to us is to create a political climate in which the nations of the earth feel safer and more virtuous *without* nuclear weapons than they do with them.

5. Proliferation to Sub-national Groups

The technical barriers to atomic weapons production have been lowered so far in recent years that a new problem has arisen which was not taken seriously (except by movie script writers) until very recent times. It is at least conceivable that sub-national groups, like the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Irish Republican Army, or the American Mafia might acquire the capability of producing atomic weapons for blackmail or terrorist activities. This possibility entered our consciousness as a result of a series of interviews by John McPhee with a retired atomic weapons designer named Theodore Taylor, which appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine in 1973. (The interviews were published in book form in 1974 under the title *The Curve of Binding Energy.)* Taylor provided a convincing scenario in which some back yard mechanics would construct an atomic device out of stolen plutonium and use it to knock down one of New York's World Trade Center towers.

We can, however, do a number of things which would make such diversion and refabrication of fissionable materials much less easy. One of the best reasons for the current delay in the move to plutonium recycling is to allow time for these techniques to be developed and incorporated into regular industrial practices, both here and abroad.

5. Spurious Arguments

The President's announced policy of delaying the move to commercial breeder reactors and fuel reprocessing has not satisfied his most severe critics. Ralph Nader was reported to have summarily rejected a tentative feeler about support for the President's policy. Nothing short of a complete moratorium on all new atomic power plant construction would meet with his approval.

What are the reasons for such an extreme anti-nuclear stance? Nader's sentiments are not, after all peculiar to him. They are shared by thousands of citizens across the country. One of the understandable grounds for this anti-nuclear sentiment is the proliferation problem which we discussed above. There are in addition two spurious problems which are often mentioned as decisive grounds for rejecting the nuclear power option. These are the problems of the catastrophic accident and radioactive waste disposal.

1. The Catastrophic Accident

Simply put, the argument is that atomic power plants are too dangerous because they might blow up. It is conceivable that a catastrophic accident could result in a radioactive release that could kill thousands. But the Rasmussen study of reactor safety showed such catastrophic accidents are *extremely* improbable. In other words, such an accident cannot happen at all frequently. (Rasmussen's logic and figures have been critiqued by knowledgeable independent parties, such as the American Physical Society. These critiques have altered some of the numbers on his final balance sheet, but have not successfully undermined his main conclusions.) That means the risks to you and me from such a possibility are far lower than the risks we take every day as a result, say, of driving automobiles or flying in airplanes. Over the long haul, the number of casualties due to atomic power will be vanishingly small in comparison to the casualties generated by these other commonplace and freely accepted risks of living. [For a contrary argument, see Garrett Hardin's "Pejorism: The Middle Way" in the NAR, Summer 1976—*Ed.*]

2. The Insoluble Problem of Waste

The second spurious objection has to

do with the supposedly insoluble nature of the radioactive waste disposal problem. But as Bernard Cohen pointed out in the June 1977 issue of *Scientific American,* such wastes are a serious hazard for centuries rather than for millenia if the plutonium is extracted before final disposal. After 400 years or so one would have to eat or drink large quantities of these wastes directly in order to suffer significant harm. 400 years is not very long in the scale of geological time, so it will not be difficult to find mineral formations that will be stable for such a period.

If the wastes are buried at a depth of 1800 feet, the natural radioactivity continuously released by the rocks between the wastes and the surface will be greater than that released by the wastes themselves.

The amount of space required for such disposal is not large. Cohen figures that if we went to an all-nuclear economy (400 1000-megawatt power plants running at full power), the area required for waste disposal would be about one square mile for each hundred years of operation. The task of keeping watch over these wastes would hardly keep one person employed full time. Clearly, the waste disposal problem is not insurmountable.

6. The Secret Source of Anti-Nuclear Sentiment

Why then do such large numbers of people respond so negatively to the prospects of an all-nuclear economy? How can otherwise sensitive and intelligent persons drive their automobiles through heavy traffic to attend protest demonstrations against the hazards of nuclear power production without the slightest awareness of the incongruity of their actions?

Some observers, such as Hal Hellman (author of the 1976 book *Technophobia*), view the phenomenon as a kind of endemic nuttiness, like the widespread willingness to believe in astrology and the healing power of pyramids. A more sympathetic explanation has been constructed by Hohenemser, Kasperson, and Kates in an article on the distrust of nuclear power which appeared in the April 1, 1977, issue of *Science* magazine. These authors argue that the real hazard to our lives and civilization is the Great Powers' burgeoning stockpile of atomic weapons. The "Ban-the-bomb" movement fizzled out in the early 1960s, but since then the number of atomic warheads has grown from the thousands to the tens of thousands. We have atomic warheads in more than a thousand ICBMs, in the bomb bays of hundreds of airplanes, on ships at sea, and stockpiled at military bases around the world. These deadly caches are all around us. The aircraft making those beautiful contrails in the military flight lanes over many parts of the country probably carry, on occasion, fully-armed hydrogen bombs. We have atomic warheads in our air-to-air missiles, in our torpedos and depth charges, and in artillery shells down to the size of divisional 155-mm howitzers. There is plenty of opportunity here for accident, diversion, or for quick and devastating acts of war.

Hohenemser *et al.* argue that the realistic fear of this threat has been repressed because of the evident impossibility of achieving a general disarmament agreement. This repressed fear has then been displaced onto the comparatively benign problems of the infant commercial atomic power industry.

This explanation has a ring of plausibility about it, as do many "Freudian" explanations of irrational compulsions. It does not, of course, make the fanatic resistance to atomic power production correct or defensible. But it does make it more understandable.

7. Conclusion

The intention here has been to demonstrate that breeder reactors and fuel reprocessing are inescapable necessities *if* we are going to maintain something like our present standard of living over the next two or three decades and beyond. But why should we go to such effort to maintain our present, supposedly opulent, standard of living? What would happen if we did not try to maintain ourselves by such heroic technological achievements?

We had a foretaste of what might happen when the OPEC countries tripled and then quadrupled their oil prices in a matter of days in 1973. Our *average* energy costs did not rise by nearly that amount. Much of our oil came from domestic sources where the price was controlled. The price of gas, coal, and uranium was not immediately affected. Yet even this modest average price rise drained off so much of the surplus purchasing power which would otherwise have been available for consumption or investment, that the Keynesian "accelerator" and "multiplier" effects became "decelerator" and "divider" effects and produced the deep economic recession of 1974-75. Unemployment soon rose above 9%.

The economic consequences of tripling or quadrupling the *average* cost of energy can only be imagined. It would probably be accompanied by a general economic collapse as deep and extensive as the world-wide "Great Depression" of the 1930s, or worse.

The American people were surprisingly docile during the Great Depression. But my older colleagues who lived through it assure me they were peaceful and confident because they never surrendered the hope that their situation was temporary and would soon improve.

Those surviving the sort of general collapse sketched out in the book *The Limits to Growth* would find hope much harder to come by. They would see their situation as quite literally a dead end in which no one's hopes could be realized. Hence they might be expected to react as the American urban blacks did in the late 1960s, when the hopes engendered by the civil rights reforms were not fulfilled. Or they might react as the people of Germany did after World War I, when the Allies took their hope as well as their conquests away from them.

When I try to envision the political and social conditions which we would obtain immediately after one of the economic debacles described in *The Limits to Growth,* I see social instability, violence, and revolution. I then see a pattern of events made familiar by historians from Thucydides to Lord Acton. The revolutionary anarchy will produce a strong-man government which will restrict or suspend civil liberties and embark on aggressive wars of expansion and conquest. The only difference will be that, in this case, the belligerents will all be armed with atomic weapons.

At bottom, the choice we are facing is a remarkably simple one. It is between the possibility of life and the certainty of death. If we fail to make a successful transition from an economy based on limited non-renewable fossil fuels to one based on nuclear energy it is doubtful that we, or our families, or the very fabric of our society and culture, will be able to survive the resulting holocaust. The attempt to develop and utilize the inexhaustible energy available from fission breeder reactors is fraught with complications, pitfalls, and even great dangers. But these difficulties and dangers shrink into insignificance in comparison to the hazards entailed by *not* developing the breeder reactor option. —*Fred W. Hallberg*

Robert Richardson

Two Ways to Choose the Weather

"Ultimately, I believe people will demand that something be done about the weather and our means of coping with it to reduce peak heating and cooling loads."

The speaker is a distinguished meteorologist.* The occasion is a symposium on meteorological instrumentation and the topic is "Needs of the 1980's." He continues:

"As the world fills full of people they must live closer to one another and the risk of weather or environmental disaster increases. As a consequence, losses suffered by nations from severe storms will increase. As the losses increase, it becomes much easier to show a better cost benefit ratio for weather control activities. We will see both increased demand from the general public for control of severe weather and an increased willingness by government to fund these activities. In my view, weather modification research and application will be one of the most rapidly growing activities of atmospheric scientists and practitioners during the next couple of decades."

Those of us who tend to think the road to weather control must pass first through the territory of accurate prediction and who feel that some of the hazards along this path remain to be removed, may find this forecast hard to credit. However, another projection easily overleaps this difficulty.

"I predict increasing globalization of all our atmospheric and oceanic observational systems, our data processing, and our forecasts . . . . I predict that before 1980 we will have global coverage by synchronous orbit and polar orbiting meteorological satellites, and from these observations we will be able to develop air motion, temperature, and humidity measurements in four dimensions with better accuracy and much greater density of coverage than we are now able to obtain . . . Further, I predict that during the 1980's the world will develop international means to fund, support and operate these systems."

So the old dream of useful numerical weather prediction is now very close to reality. Only one problem remains to be considered.

"Where is all the new technology needed . . . to satisfy these requirements going to come from? That is the easy part; in fact, we could not avoid new technology if we wanted to . . . . Apparently man cannot control technological advance any longer. It is now so widespread, so broadly based . . . that it is not subject to the type of controls exercised in the past . . . . The rate of technological advance will continue to accelerate because the popular demand for change will continue to escalate and it will be heard with a clearer voice."

The speaker looks toward a lessening of military influence in the world and expects weather modification activities to burgeon in a world at peace. Nations depend increasingly upon trade with each other to maintain themselves. he says, and this growing interdependency may bring them to realize that competition must be contained, that frictions must be controlled and that nations must learn to live together.

"There are two universal laws, gravity and greed. I am cynical enough to suggest that the greatest driving force for world peace is not man's morality, but man's greed, and that the result of our current formation of trading blocks [*sic*] will be a lessening of competition, an increase in trade, and an increase in cooperation between nations.

"Meteorology is practiced as a supporting service to the political and commercial activities of the world. As political/economic thinking becomes more international . . . our meteorological systems thinking must extend beyond our national limits, cross the oceans and embrace the whole world."

Controlling the weather is only one aspect of the sound environmental management of the globe which is sure to come. The other indispensable ingredient is pollution control. We do not have a realistic program for pollution control at the present time, but, "As we learn to monitor the environment in detail, government can institute and carry out effective controls to safeguard our welfare and our interests,"

So, we are told, the weather will inevitably be controlled. The rising tide of progress cannot be stopped. Anything is possible but that. We can make the weather subject to our will. But not technology.

Given the scope of the endeavor proposed and the complexity of the social and political issues to which it must give rise—and to which the speaker is evidently numb—this plan for the meteorological modulation of the planet may seem more than just a little bit far-fetched. Yet Professor Suomi is no mere visionary, writing far-out scenarios for the futurist's delight. He is a working scientist on the frontiers of his field. True, the situation toward which he looks is still to a great extent a dream. That he believes in it does not mean that it can or will come true. But work toward the goals which he embraces is already under way and he commands the talent and the money required to pursue the dream full tilt. He intends to see bad weather bite the dust. And he expects our thanks.

No doubt he will get it gladly from most of us. More and more these days, in the places where we prefer to work and play and congregate, the weather is being carefully kept at bay. Even the farmer as he works the land sits atop his tractor in an air-conditioned cab. To most of us the weather seems, as it does to Professor Suomi, to be only a costly and distracting nuisance, a waste of energy, a threat. So it is goodbye, good riddance, no regrets.

* * *

But perhaps we ought to pause before we slay the beast. Is there nothing more to see or say than this? Here is the voice of one, at least, who thinks there is.

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*From an address by Verner E. Suomi, delivered at a University of Wisconsin symposium and quoted from the *Research Newsletter* of the University's Industry Research program.

"I am a woman of the seasons," says Mahala Greenberg, writing in a recent issue of *Country Women*.* "I grew up with the weather cycle intimately affecting my whole physical being and consciousness, though I gave it no thought at the time. Cold Iowa winters with deep snow, incredibly fragile spring green, hot buzzing lazy summers, intense emotional moments in the wild sad joyful color and wind of fall."

The issue of the magazine in which Ms. Greenberg reflects on the seasons is devoted to "cycles" and it is her discovery of her relationship to the cycle of the weather that she tells.

"I lived in California for five years," She goes on. "After one or two I began to find myself driving down Vine Street in Berkeley in the fall because it was the only street that had trees whose leaves turned . . . . Then I lived in Bakersfield for awhile, a place which was a desert for me physically and spiritually. The weather cycle there brought me so low I found myself opening my door every night and standing there with an intense desire, an intense sense of loss which I could not define or understand."

Still later she moved to New York "where weather doesn't exist, and if you open your door at night, you're out of your mind." Slowly she became aware of her susceptibility to the weather. She went to the ocean and found her emotions swept high or low depending on the state of the sea. "Also, when I left New York," she says, "and got into any country, I always found my mood changed, and often felt comfort, especially sitting against a tree and keeping quiet and letting sound and color seep into me. Wind is especially a strong force. And rain, which can drive me to awful lows or sometimes give me a gentle sense of happiness.

"When I finally came to understand that it was the weather and cyclic change itself that was affecting me, I was incredibly excited . . . . Now I live in the country and in a place (Northern Wisconsin) where the seasons are pretty extreme.

"It's wonderful . . . I accept that the rhythm of any life is made of high moments and low ones, serene ones and intense ones. Before I always struggled to 'understand' my moods. Now I know that much of what I feel has nothing to do with my head . . . so feeling down isn't scary anymore. And when the wind blows hard before a storm, I feel it inside of me in a real triple forte crescendo of mounting tension and excitement . . .

"When the moon is full, I can't sleep most of that night . . . . I watch the movement of the night sky.

"Winter is the resting time. I am keenly aware that all the trees that surround us have drawn their life down into their roots and are waiting. Many of the animals are hibernating. I am glad that, like the mice and deer, I am awake and leave my tracks in the woods in winter as they do, skimming along in the silence on my skis. But I also have learned to hibernate, in those intensely cold and dark days of winter, or rainy days of spring or fall, when instinct calls one to pull the covers over one's head—we do.

"Then while the snow is still deep and the nights still very cold, the sun begins to warm up whatever it touches in the day and I know the sap will rise soon. The new cycle starts gently. We tap our trees, we snowshoe through our sunny quiet woods listening to the plink-plink-plink of maple sap dropping into buckets. Geese fly over. Juncoes appear. The snow melts and the rivers swell.

"It is wonderful to plant . . . In the hot days of June, as I plant a drill of seed, I do not think. My consciousness is in my body, feeling the warmth of the sun on my bare back, and in my fingers dropping each seed, smoothing the dirt.

"Each season, as I free my mind from the old lists and timetables that used to fill it, I perceive more of the natural world . . . .

"In the fall and in the spring, when the geese fly overhead and the wind rises, I always feel that same desire that made me stand at my door that night in Bakersfield. It is wanderlust. Now I know that it is not dissatisfaction with my life, but it is an intense desire to leave what is familiar for the unknown, to go over the hill to see what's on the other side . . . ."

The obvious difference between Mahala Greenberg's grasp of the weather and Professor Suomi's is that hers is immediate and experiential and his is professional and detached. She knows what she knows of it first hand; his knowledge is technical and abstract. She lives in a cabin in the woods and seeks immersion in the elements; he closes himself off in a research lab.

In fact, that laboratory where the weather comes under his expert scrutiny and has its future weighed is high in an ultra-modern building almost twenty stories tall—a building which is just as weather-tight as the latest technology and a large NASA grant could make it. No window opens there. Barring fairly frequent mechanical breakdowns, no breath of air is allowed to go mechanically unmodified. Every day of the year either the furnace or the air conditioner runs and powerful blowers manage more or less to spread the effects around. Since there are not a dozen days a year in

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*The address of *Country Women* is Box 51, Albion, CA 95140.

that climate when it is hot enough outside to do much more than pleasantly perspire, the air conditioner is essentially a gratuitous tribute to itself. But there it is, cost-benefit analysis be damned, toiling noisily away, in this engineered sky-island of thought where the insights, no doubt, are always fresh, but the air itself never is.

* * *

But the dissimilar character of the spaces in which Verner Suomi and Mahala Greenberg live and work is only the point on which their differences turn. The differences themselves are multiple and vast.

For her weather is an invitation to experience; to him it is a problem to be solved, an environmental hazard like sewage or smog. She delights in its variety and celebrates the alterations that it brings; he wants to ride over it with technique and flatten out its wayward curves. She seeks and sees a permanence behind its endless change and wants to live in that; he rides the tides of fashion, technological progress and public whim and wants to bend the weather into a suitable shape for them. Through her response to the weather she opens her life to a realm that is primordially ordered, but humanly unordained, and encounters something which she knows to be more than the echo of herself; he offers to make the weather the tame and dependable adjunct of our political and commercial lives.

She welcomes the unknown; he wants to obliterate it. She is a free being, able and willing to yield to nature's necessities. He is a being without choice, driven to conquer, he says, by the pressures of the technological imperative and surging consumer demand for a better weather product.

She waits upon nature and herself; he is the willing servant of the social status quo. She seeks to know the weather, as she seeks to know herself, in order to deepen and enhance her understanding and her life. He is busy turning knowledge into power.

He speaks in neutral tones. No note of enthusiasm, no hint of personal need creeps in. Yet this apparently selfless urge to save the world from the weather in order to reduce heating and cooling costs for all mankind is monomaniacal and messianic to the core. The passion for power is not spoken—perhaps this bland and genial man has never spoken it even to himself—but it is there, global in its reach and coldly totalitarian in its implications. And even in passing he does not pause to note that one of the principal partners in the weather modification enterprise is the Pentagon. To a certain kind of mind, controlling the weather simply means aiming it at somebody else and military planners have found plenty to envy in the potent hurricane. That is why a lot of weather modification research bears the brand of DoD. He says, however, no word of this.

He speaks of peace, but only to suppose that at its advent the powers that be will launch a joint assault upon their common natural enemy, the wind.

He speaks, indeed, as though he spoke with reason's voice and offered only clearly reasoned benefits. She admits her passion and speaks out of it and offers nothing but the sharing of her sense of life and what it is that makes it good. She expresses only her feelings, to be sure. But so, despite appearances, does he—and his are armed.

Her view is old and wise and deep, yet innocent and ever new. His is at once callow and cynical, technically sophisticated and humanly naïve. His bears the stamp of science and the seal of government. Expect it then to be the rape of hers. □

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. . . another man's poison

Kenneth Lash

O Britannia!

I had a leave from teaching so I went abroad. I didn't especially want to, but colleagues are disappointed if you don't. You're denying a ritual. I chose England because I like the language, and rarely hear it.

* * *

The first "event" of the trip took place immediately upon my climbing down from the 747. Walking through a long tunnel in Heathrow airport I became aware of the somewhat dumpy figure of a lady walking ahead of me in flat shoes and tapping onto the cement every third or fourth step a six-foot wooden stick, rough hewn and forked at the top. It was more than eccentric and I suspected before I overtook her who it must be. "It's Miss Mead, isn't it?" I said, coming alongside. She stopped and turned. "Yes," she said, with a slight smile. "Just want to offer you good wishes," I said. "Thank you," she said, "thank you." I moved off, leaving her in peace to shuffle along toward London Town and her work as Omnipresence.

* * *

My wife and I arrived in London to take up our reservations at a hotel recommended by a friend. It featured a small Victorian courtyard, a little jewel of a lobby dominated by a grand staircase descending from a mezzanine, small, plain rooms, and large inflated prices. It turned out to be Big Daddy Amin's favorite hotel, but he couldn't patronize it in his (threatened) coming visit because it couldn't contain the 250 persons he proposed to bring as entourage. We were lucky to have rooms at all. London was jammed, even in early May, owing to the fact that everybody loves a party and most are fascinated by royalty and it was the Queen's Silver Jubilee. People were walking the streets, bags in hand, searching for rooms; they were sleeping at the airport. The streets of London were choking, like crosstown Manhattan at 4:30. Cab drivers in their effort to move through it, though they may drive this way all the time, wove in and out, cut in front of each other with an outrageous lack of mercy, yet never blew their horns, never cursed, never even made a face let alone an obscene gesture. Along with North Sea oil they may be one of England's few remaining sources of energy.

* * *

A major feature of our visit was to be a week on a canal boat touring the Midlands. I was rather proud of having thought of it and made the arrangements. It started out well. We left London and made our way north to a small village called Hockley Heath, where we were to meet the boat behind the Wharf Inn. The Wharf Inn was situated along the banks of a canal; it was a pub of a rather shabby sort, not quite Long John Silver but Dylan Thomas would have been pleased by the busty barmaid with the varicose veins. After an hour's wait the boat arrived, slowly drifting in to the bank. H.M.S. *Unicorn*, seventy feet long, seven feet wide. That was something of a surprise. We clambered aboard, said hello to our skipper, Stephen, a pleasant fellow in his twenties who lived all his young life on the canals and whose speech was difficult to understand. After a bad lunch at the pub we set out on our journey downcountry from Hockley Heath.

When I had envisioned the trip, I saw myself sitting out on the deck on a comfortable chair smoking a cigar and watching the fabled green countryside of England drift slowly by, serene, untroubled, a voyage into the past. I did indeed sit up front in the small open space at the prow of the boat on a hard bench underneath which the coal was kept, and I did light a cigar and I did begin to see good English greenery as we putted slowly downstream. We had gone about 500 yards when we encountered a lock. Stephen steered the long boat bumping and scraping into the lock, jumped off, came down and handed me a crank without a word, then ran ahead with a crank of his own and began winding at something or other.

Let me describe these locks. The canals, of course, are a century or two old, very narrow, originally designed to support long barges of freight which were hauled by ropes attached to man, horse, or mule pulling alongside on the towpath. Small bridges still exist built in two halves with a space for the tow ropes to move between. The locks themselves are deep wood and rock and cement closets. Closed at both ends, and operated by a design unchanged in two hundred years. At one end a gate under water raises and lowers by means of a cranking mechanism; that is, if you're going downcountry you crank the gate up and the water runs out, letting your boat slowly sink down the slime-edged walls of the lock till it reaches the next level of the stream. At the back of the lock is a portal gate made of oak, which swings open and shut. Manually. Attached to this portal is generally a piece of solid English oak (very often with a metal plaque assuring you it is solid English oak, 1854), about half the length of a telephone pole and about ten by ten thick. At the outer end of it, set into the muddy ground of the towpath, is a semicircle of bricks set up on end into which you can dig your heels as you bend down two feet from the ground, put your back against that mighty pole of oak, and shove backwards with all your strength to try to get that gate to move against the pressure of the water.

Well, there I suddenly was. Trying in best monkey fashion to imitate what Stephen was doing, I slid my crank over the projection of the gear mechanism at the front gate and gave a good pull. Nothing happened. I put both hands on the crank, leaned back, and pulled with all my might. I moved the gears two notches. I pulled again. Nothing moved at all. I stood there, with the crank in my hand, mud on my sneakers, drizzle in my hair, and waited for Stephen to notice. Which he did, came over with his crank (*his* was polished brass), dug his heels in, gave a yank, and wound the whole thing up as nicely as you please. He then pointed to that piece of oak, that oaken pole at the back. Well of course I couldn't budge that either. But when he came over and both of us dug our heels in and could barely get it to move, I didn't feel as useless. Some ten minutes later we were successfully past that lock.

We started off again, putting down the canal, and this time went at least 600 yards before we encountered the next lock. But as I got off the boat this time to do (or at least to offer) my poor bit, I saw that the lock we had now entered was one in a series. Six of them, one after another down into the countryside. It's called a "flight" of locks. English humor is neither new nor restrained. I don't know how long it took us to get through them all. I do know that by the time we got through the last one I was occasionally able to use that crank effectively, and occasionally able to move that immense wooden portal attached to the timber, and that instead of feeling proud I was cursing. It was very clear to me that I had overlooked an essential element in a trip through the canals. Nor of course had the company of whom I had made inquiries mentioned any such thing as locks. By the time we hove to at five o'clock I was soaked, my back ached, my cigars were damp, I had seen damned little of the English countryside but a great deal of English mud and slime, and I was ready to jump ship. But I was too tired. I only wanted to get into my bunk. But . . . the space between the bunk and the side of the boat was so narrow that as I bent to take off my trousers my head banged against the bunkboard. "It needs only the Marx brothers!" I cried.

Morning came, stiffly. Stephen was happily sizzling bacon on the two-burner propane stove. It smelled bad. After breakfast we were off again. Today it was raining, and very cold. The boat had at the front, just inside the door (*bow* and *hatch* if you prefer), a very small coal-burning stove, the sort that would make a darling planter. It was supposed to keep us warm, or at least keep us from congealing. And it did, once you got it going, but it was slow and stubborn. "It's a bloody swine to start," Stephen said. So we called it The Swine. Well, The Swine was smoking away as we slowly and smoothly putted our usual five or six hundred feet before we reached our first lock. Over the side, crank, dig in your heels and shove, jump back on, move along to the next lock, jump over the side, fit the crank on. At noon we tied up along the bank for lunch at a country pub. We had now been voyaging on H.M.S. *Unicorn* from noon yesterday to noon today. As we walked along toward the pub there was a road sign with arrows. One of the arrows said: "Hockley Heath—2 miles."

Along with green stretches of countryside and dots of pub, another memorable event of our inching voyage was to come across this handsomely engraved sign along the towpath: "This is a National Trust, not a public right of way. You are welcome to use it, but no guns or radios are allowed." Of course one hears that England is the most civilized country in the world. Whether or not that is true, a sign that forbids transistor radios in any place meant for the pleasure or at least comfort of the public is an advancement in civilization so far removed from the probabilities of my own country as to require perhaps another two hundred years for us to reach it. I can foresee The National Rifle Association using its convenient letters to become also The National Radio Association, protecting the right of one person to kill the peace of another as a constitutional privilege.

The wide-rolling, beautifully mannered English countryside looks to have been created by The Great Landscape Architect in the Sky. Cows sitting on those soft hillsides look as if they were invented there. Sheep grazed silently under apple trees. I expected momentarily to hear Bach music come flooding down. And yet during the entire Midlands trip and later by car down through Devon and Cornwall, and though this was early May and the weather generally usable, we saw not one tractor at work, not one person in any field working. Only the animals. I assume that if the cows show up at dusk someone milks them.

If this reflects a disinclination toward work, it is echoed in the towns. Work on buildings in village centers seemed to start raggedly somewhere around ten o'clock, stop rather more precisely at twelve for lunch, resume around two, and drift off at four. While as a visitor one might indulge in admirations of "the quiet pace," it is not a happy thing when one considers the country's economic peril.

England felt not so much as if it were muddling through but as if it were coasting, as if the engine had been turned off, the driver had left, and people were opening doors and jumping quietly out.

There is a sense throughout the country of people not working hard. And of not being paid well for what work they do. For example, the usual salary posted in the windows of employment agencies for clerical jobs, gray-blue collar jobs, and almost any job open to a woman, is 3000 pounds a year (around $5000). The government immediately draws off 30% of that in taxes. Thus people are left with a disposable income of some 3000 dollars a year. Living is not cheap. Inflation sees to that. So the unions keep calling strikes, often get raises, and win nothing at all because they either do not or will not understand that wage hikes are largely meaningless unless tied to increases in productivity which can absorb the new wage costs without raising prices and inflating the wage raise into a zero gain. And a country-wide loss, as exports lose out in the international pricing competition, thus no new jobs, no money flowing into the country. An Englishman I spoke with described the general scene by saying the English working man and his union had become expert at cutting up the pie, but showed no inclination whatever to do anything to make that pie larger.

I didn't have an opportunity to ask him about my revenge theory. I believe it likely that the destruction, including the self-destruction, that is going on within the British economy owes in part to such historical process as loss of easy and cheap materials and labor from the Empire, but that it also has to do with the coming of a time of revenge by the English working classes. I remember reading those novels where at the death of Lord So-and-So he would leave in his will to Hawkins, the faithful manservant who had served him for thirty-four years, the sum of 400 pounds. I used to multiply that by the five dollars the pound was then worth, arrive at a sum of two thousand dollars, try to multiply it again to account for inflation since that time, but no matter how I tried, the bequest was niggardly. And I knew that the yearly wages of servants were miniscule. I knew that the wages of miners and textile workers were a human disgrace, often compounded by industrial brutality which saw clerks forced to furnish their own pencils, workers in offices forced to bring their own coal for a bit of warmth. I knew that whereas the British aristocrat may have had one of the easiest lives on this earth, a great number of people were required to support it. I knew also that nonetheless there was loyalty to the system, that the excesses of the aristocracy although they exist everywhere were here perhaps less sharp than elsewhere and rarely hideous, that there was a certain amount of enlightenment as human affairs go, and that the working man and the servant did in fact share with the aristocrat common ideals, commonly held. One noted for example in *Upstairs, Downstairs* how small the differences were in essence, that there was more money upstairs and a more severe snobbishness downstairs. The country mattered in both places. Equally.

But Hudson is gone, Mrs. Bridges is gone, mere figures of fun to their descendants. And of anger, at the dignified acceptance of exploitation. Abstracted from the socio-religious context of its time the older workingclass behavior is at once both ridiculous and infuriating. *And* a threat . . . as if someone or something were expecting *me* to put up with such stuff and call it a life. To hell and all with that. And don't go on about the good of the bloody country. It's been good for *them* all this time, now it's to be good for *us*. Or it'll be good for nobody.

History seems to abhor nothing at all let alone a moral vacuum, but when there is one the wind certainly shifts. And picks up speed. Hudson was an English yeoman. With his going the bottom seems to be falling out of a structure. Ten centuries of aristocratic rule and ideology dissolving into comedy in a few decades. Because—no matter what the economic theorizing—the ruled simply will no longer have it.

Regardless of value judgments—simply as a constant in psychological history—an ideology brought down is an ideology kicked. All that was its dark side is exposed, hung up in public view. Revenge is junk food, but sweet to the impoverished soul. So I expect that in this new century of the common man, with in England the rise of the Labour party, with a socialist government supplanting an empire, a stream of social revenge is flowing up from chasms of repression.

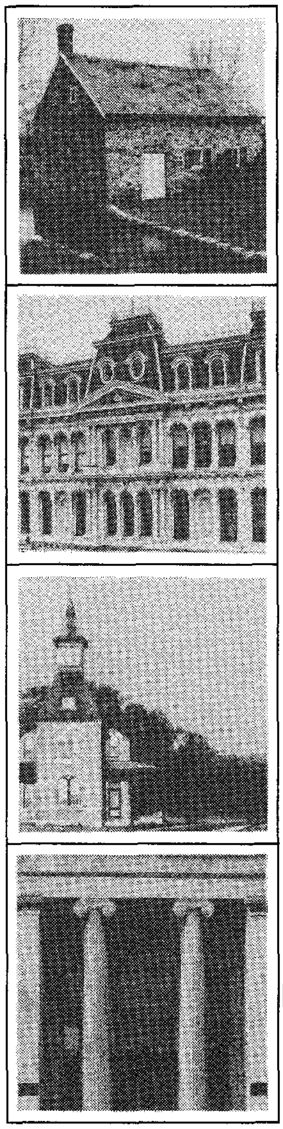
For example, the punitive taxation of the estates of the wealthy is clearly meant to destroy such estates, to literally wipe them away, with all they stand for, with all they remind of. Under the masquerade of economic fair play a planned breaking is under way. All right, so the workingclass takes over. But it must be prepared then to become a *working* workingclass, not simply a social designation. It must out of its own resources supplant what it has thrown off, supply of itself what it demands. Otherwise the aristocracy will be back, in one form or another.

Though I have no memory for exact statistics, I saw something to the effect that a hundred thousand Japanese workers produce two hundred thousand cars (that are reliable), and two hundred thousand English workers produce one hundred thousand cars (that aren't). We may profess to find this endearing, appealing even, but we shouldn't. In the technological world it is economics that determines politics. When the worm turns, is it to be everywhere at the expense of democracy?

A BBC man proposed an interesting theory to me about the negative contribution of the non-workingclass. He said that part of the present problem of English industry stemmed from earlier aristocratic traditions. When, he said, 19th-century business people made fortunes most of that money did not go back into the mills, the factories, the business itself, to produce in turn new capital and more jobs, but rather went in to the buying of land. Because, after all, that was the hallmark of success, to be a landed person, to be gentry. Suddenly one could buy his way in to that class, and most of them did, so that this money was in a sense non-productive—the land they bought including the farms probably producing neither more nor less than it had before they bought it. And, he went on to say, the aristocratic tradition prevailed in another way that was to have its unlooked-for results: business was not of course considered a suitable occupation for sons of the upper classes. Their options were limited to the Church, Foreign Office, Parliament, perhaps a proper regiment. All jobs which in current social and political circumstance are judged either dreary or déclassé. So, he went on with amusement, the BBC comes to find that it is somehow considered a "suitable" occupation for children of distinguished family, with the result that they're drowning in applicants coming down from Oxford, Cambridge, et al.

History sometimes meanders in so fanciful a way that if its movements could be transliterated into line and form one might see a uniquely inventive earth-work . . .

(This is the first part of a two-part column.)



Caution: Endangered Species

Since 1930, more than 4,000 important American landmarks have been needlessly destroyed . . . to say nothing of individual homes, entire sections of our cities. And, more are disappearing every year. The only way to stop this destruction is to get involved. Personally. For more information, write: National Trust for Historic Preservation, Department 0605, 740 Jackson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20006.

PAUL SHEPARD

PLACE IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Place in American life begins with one of the most distinctive bodies of art we have produced. A group of about forty painters, sometimes called "The Hudson River School," produced several thousand canvases of New England landscapes in only about three decades before the Civil War. Almost everyone is familiar in a general way with these pictures, some of which are in the larger American galleries. Their real abundance is not often appreciated, for they are stored by the hundreds in gallery cellars and are owned privately in great numbers. The question of why they were painted has been seldom asked and poorly answered. Usually the subject is confined to the notion of frontiers, a sense of scale, conquering the wilderness, or it emerges within the history of art, a consideration of the styles, training and influences of the painters in a cultural era called Romanticism.

In that idiom the paintings are provincial expressions of painterly traditions of England and Northwestern Europe, with its centuries of "Italianate" influences and Dutch predecessors. But why they are set in such a restricted geography, compressed in time, homogeneous in subject and naturalism, cannot be explained simply as an American manifestation of a larger tradition. The American paintings are actually unique in a number of ways, the main one being that they are portraits of places, especially wild places.

Their homogeneity disappears when they are examined through the eyes of the naturalist. What to the ordinary viewer appear to be repetitive scenes of forest and mountain are actually meticulous explorations of the diversity within a unity, the variations on themes of a certain biome and geography. Seldom, perhaps never, in modern Western art has there been such focused scrutiny of the appearance of a region, especially of its geological and botanical details.

If you drive through these landscapes today you see a phenomenon that is happening almost everywhere—changes whose origins and materials, designs and purposes do not originate locally: roads, buildings, transmission lines, vehicles—the whole paraphernalia of technophilia—brought from elsewhere, from common centers of planning and production. The countrysides produced by such means are themselves duplications of one another. Among an educated and somewhat supercilious class this produces a familiar lament: the loss of native crafts and local industry to the enveloping tentacles of centralized, political and industrial forces in a society whose mastery of nature is based on the replication of machines and the modification of terrain to make them work.

But why do we mourn the loss of the native ambience? Critics say it is only self-indulgent nostalgia, sentimental attachment for a past when life was simplr or cleaner—largely a self-deluded view. This opinion is echoed by the minions of change: our attachment to obsolete, old fashioned economies, skill or stylesis but a romanticdream. Those afraid of progress are said to cling to the past and impede growth and affluence. Indicted by this accusation of weakness and immaturity we yield to its logic, and the world-wide blenderizing goes on, with the blessing of the industrial state, converting the globe, piece by piece, into a business network of uniform parts and identical places.

The angry reaction to romanticism—past or present—has just about run its course. Whatever the foibles of romanticism, its concern for the organic, for the wholeness of things, for feeling as well as reason, has outlived the spurts of bad taste and emotional affectation which it generated. Even so, the romantic in each of us remains a whipping boy, an excuse for our own lack of conviction. The yearning for scenery, nostalgia for the family farm, respite from the urban roar, a sensitivity to wildlife: these are regarded still as the indulgences of those who can afford them, symbols of wealth and privilege. Enthusiasm for the local and unique, the customs and environments that differentiate one region from another, handicrafts and skills, things homemade, exotic places, "primitive" peoples, all are associated with the idle amusement of the few.

And, in a sense, they should be scorned. They have been the playthings of fossilfuelman, a part of his connoisseurship of cute objects and colorful places. Parochial values are debauched by layers of exploitation and misunderstanding. Picturesqueness reduces everything it touches to mere surfaces. Ever since the 18th century the gentility went about Italy speaking of the "genius loci" as though it were a landscape painting. They pimped for tourism's whoring of place. The admirers of landscape were not the opponents but the agents of the Faustian spirit, the founders of the *esthetic* passion for nature who would facilitate the destruction of peoples and places for the arts by perceiving them as "local color," and subordinating them through commercial travel to the movers and changers at the heart of Progress.

To the old Romans whose poetry created the pastoral, the "genius loci" had not meant picturesqueness at all but referred to a tutelar divinity, a guardian spirit. It had been the same

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among the Greeks, whose temples were expressions of the character of particular goddesses in whose laps the temples were placed. The sublety with which they were accommodated to the terrain extended even to the configuration of the horizon; the temple passages were designed to guide ritual processions whose central themes were a dialogue between the people and the earth.[1]

However much they admired the old arts, educated gentlemen more than a millenium later could feel little of the old pagan interior sense in which these sacred places were experienced as part of themselves. The Jews and Christians had methodically sought out the old shrines and turned them into churches whose essential purpose was to direct the religious inspiration away from that place.[2] The bishops who consecrated them and the liturgy they followed referred to a Holy Land elsewhere, a heaven and hell which were nowhere and everywhere.

In his widely read book on *The Sacred and the Profane,* Mircea Eliade has instructed a whole generation on the history of sacred places: the rites and ceremonies that "cosmosize" a hearth or an altar.[3] But there is for him no real chithonic, no real spirits, only human beliefs. Eliade is a Christian historian. Although at pains to insist on the religious man's loyalty to the heterogeneity of space, he sees it only as something made by men. The intrinsic qualities of the spring or cave or mountain are for him little more than markers. There is not the slightest hint that the spiritual entities which the Romans, Greeks and scores of so-called primitives conceived as indwelling and indigenous were anything but cultural assertions. One always called in the forces from a centralized heaven the way one dials a long-distance operator.

Of course the Christians did not invent this making of place by will and designation. The ancient civilizations of the near East are speckled with temples built where they would be convenient to the bureaucracy, the keepers of the grain and the army barracks. The shift of attention away from the uniqueness of habitat began long before the Church fathers declared that all places on this earth are pretty much the same. Eliade's view is ultimately no different from that of municipal street-namers: the world behind the human facade is homogeneous. One *founds* rather than *discovers* place. It doesn't matter whether a priest blesses an altar or the mayor cuts a ribbon. The autochthonous forces by which the earth speaks are not part of nature but only elements in myths through which the peasants rationalize their designations of sacredness. It assumes that we know what is given and what is made.

But the polarity of the given and the made will not go away. It is the duality at the heart of knowledge, the central enigma of our private and collective identities. Arthur Modell has observed that the painting and sculpturing of the Paleolithic caves of Southern Europe often use the erosional forms of the rock as a part or whole of the animal figure.[4] This "transitional" synthesis of what is there and what is created externalizes the linked polarity between the culture, the artist and the stone, between our selves and our bodies. The artist formalizes that tension which is the core of the maturing self-consciousness.

Art, says Modell, is always a love-affair with the world. Henry Moore, the sculptor, liberates his massive reclining figures from within the stone; they do not escape so much as articulate their own particular mineral substance. Like the cave art, his work is a search for self that was not solely defined by acts of transcendence and domination that energized romantic tragedy, feelings for which the self-styled "neo-classicist" and modern highway-pipeline-parking-lot builders cannot conceal their antipathy. Romantic tears seem to them like infantile weakness. The temples and caves were part of an irretrievable past, they said.

And infantile they were, for the stresses of deprivation have regressive effects. Miss a developmental episode that belongs in your sixth year and in some respect you never get older. Even when the connections are made you are drawn back sometimes to your roots for renewal. Between the natural and human, given and made, the other and the self, what the romantics sought was "a place in which to discover a self." This apt phrase of Edith Cobb's is a way of describing a childhood process by which the terrain and its natural things become a model of cognitive structure for the plastic, order-seeking juvenile.[5]

The child, she says, seeks to make a world the way the world is made. Her studies of the biographies of geniuses led her to the conclusion that the terrain itself provided the durable gestalt upon which the intellect germinated. His home range for the eight-year old is the prime, patterned, concrete reality in his life, upon which his wavering and nubile powers of memory and logic cling and develop, like seals climbing out onto the rocks to give birth.

In his book on *The Mind of a Mnemonist,* A.R. Luria describes a man whom he observed and studied for many years, a man whose phenomenal power of memory enabled him to remember everything and anything: all the words in all the paragraphs in all the pages he ever read, a man who could repeat the names of a hundred spices or a hundred flowers in order, regardless of how much time had elapsed since he saw the list.[6] To Luria's question, "How do you do it?" the man replied that he could visually recall the book pages and that when he was given a list he took an imaginary walk in a landscape, placing each object in view along the path. To recall them he had only to picture that place again and his walk through it, to see the objects. The man was abnormal. Most of us have the blessing of remembering trivia only in the unconscious, if at all. But his anomaly was a clue to a strange and necessary relationship between place and mind.

Cobb's study of genius was a search for the genesis of thought and creativity by studying the lives of the gifted. That genius is both the "spirit of place" in its classical sense and a personal divine spark among the most powerful minds is not coincidental. That early formation of the self in children who are yet untouched by ideology is a growing awareness of one's own anatomy, the discreteness of body parts: both organs within and complexity of surface, sensory location, and feelings and moods as well. Experience for a small infant is a

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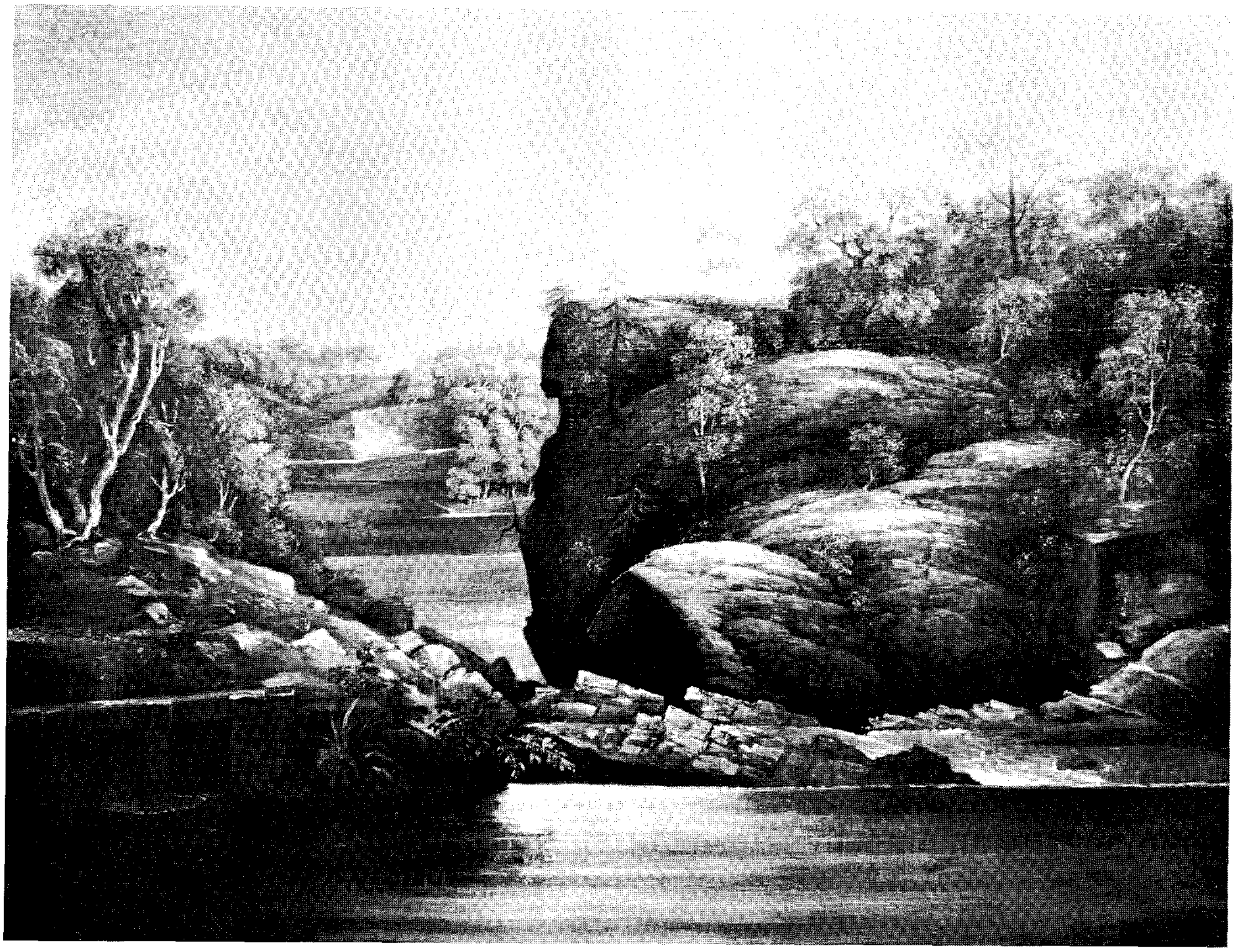
1. Vincent Scully, *The Earth, The Temple, and The Gods,* New Haven, 1962.
2. Eric Isaac, "God's Acre," *Landscape* 14 (2), 1964-5, and "Religion, Landscape and Space," *Landscape* 9 (2), 1959-60.
3. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane,* New York, 1959.
4. Arthur Modell, *Object Love and Reality,* New York, 1968, and Bertrim Lewin, *The Image and the Past,* New York, 1968.
5. Edith Cobb, *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood,* New York, 1977.
6. A.R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist,* New York, 1968.



ABOVE: John Trumbull's painting of the falls at Norwich, selected for its pseudohistorical value, as a site mentioned in J.F. Cooper's Last of the Mohicans. *It is not a landscape so much as it is a "portrait."*

NEXT PAGE: The same site on the Yantic today.

formless sea of feelings that engulf the individual. Their subjective separation requires a spatial detachment. They are intuited from external models and introjected. The constituents of self need externality and distance to be comprehended. Considering how admirable the human individual is, as Shakespeare tirelessly reminded us, the burden on the environment is great indeed. Diversity, richness, all those terms of multiplicity that describe a heterogeneous world, have been demonstrated repeatedly by biologists as essential to the development of intelligence. From nutritional and environmental studies of laboratory maze-running rats,[7] to the observation of babies with and without playpens,[8] institutionalized children,[9] and the psychology of the playground.[10] The evidence is strong that heterogeneity is like an essential nutrient.

But how does it work? You cannot, after all, just put a baby in a bag with a thousand objects and shake well before using. Claude Levi-Strauss believes that the species system of plants and animals is a durable, dependable concrete model for the development of the powers of categorizing, or basic cognition. Edith Cobb holds that the fixation on terrain is an organizing process by which the percept of relatedness is interiorized. White and his associates at Harvard find that the intelligence of children emerges relative to a spatial movement among objects, coupled with naming. All of these imply real changes in the nervous system. We can visualize the possibilities at the individual level among people by an analogy to differences that occur in the nervous systems of different species of animals who live in different habitats.

A series of paintings done about 1901 and published by the Royal Society represent a kind of extension of the terrain into the inner eye.[11] These were the first color representations of the ocular fundus, the retinas of living animals. The patterns have a likeness to environments which is inescapable among those animals which live in horizontally-structured habitats—sheep, horses, lions, dogs, men—while the fundus of others who live in the trees or under water lacks the landscape-like patterns. There is nothing mystical about this. The structure and content of the visual cells correspond to differences in the frequencies of light in sections of the visual field. In open terrestrial habitats the field is roughly divided into bands of light from the sky, the ground and the horizon. It suggests in a way perhaps more symbolic than evidential the capacity for structuring the nervous system on an external model. To me these retinas look like impressionist landscapes. In an evolutionary sense, the habitat has impressed its form upon the neural tissue, and the individual organism seeks out those places in which its sensory and nervous systems work, orienting its head and eyes to light patterns matching its visual anatomy.

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[7] Edward Bennet, et al, *Journal of Neurobiology* 3:47, 1972.

[8] Burton L. White, *Human Infants: Experience and Psychological Development*, New York, 1971.

[9] Grant Newton and Seymour Levine, eds., *Early Experience and Behavior*, Springfield, 1968.

[10] Michael Ellis, "Play: Theory and Research," in Wm. Mitchell, ed., *Environmental Design: Research and Practice*, Los Angeles, 1972.

The individual's intrinsic needs all have spatial settings which are not inventions but a mammalian heritage. In a seminal paper on what he calls "archtypal place," Mayer Spivak has enumerated thirteen subdivisions of the habitat.[12] One can live without special places for resting, feeding, conviviality, grooming, courting, and so on, but without them we become, like deprived, captive mammals, increasingly stressed and pathological.[12a] Such places are not arbitrarily labeled in this ancient tradition of mammals but are the psychological and physical prerequisites of the different behaviors. All of them have perceptual and psychological dimensions.

The development of this continuity of internal and external, the reciprocity of place and person, takes place at every level of experience. James V. Neel, studying the most remote Indians of Central and South America, was struck by the lack of parental concern for the groveling play of crawling infants.[13] They frolicked happily in the debris of village and camp, dusty or mud-smeared, thrusting everything in their mouths, tasting their way, so to speak, into the environment. Neel knew that infants everywhere do the same if given the chance. But what to our sanitary-minded society looks like infantile perversity has the wisdom of enabling the child to begin building a repertoire of antibodies against the local antigens while still in part protected by the immuno-globulins of its mother's milk. In order to do so they had to "meet" the local antigens, and the result was that the children he examined had extremely high levels of antibodies against infection. In a somewhat different perspective the child was building into its physiology an immunological counterpart of the antigenic landscape, a mapping done by children the world over if given the opportunity.

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[11] G.L. Johnson, *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, 1893, and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, Series B, vol. 194, 1901.

[12] Mayer Spivak, "Archtypal Place," *Forum*, Oct. 1973.

[12a] Stephen Boyden, ed. *Impact of Civilization on the Biology of Man*, Toronto, 1968.

[13] James V. Neel, "Lessons From a Primitive People," *Science* 170:815, 1970.

The foregoing suggests that the habitat is not merely a container but a structured surround in which the developing individual makes tenacious affiliations, that something extremely important to the individual is going on between the complex structure of those particular places and the emerging, maturing self, a process of macro-micro correlation, mostly unconscious, essential to the growth of personal identity.

With this in mind, we can turn again to those large, excruciatingly detailed paintings made along the rivers and among the mountains of the Northeast during the second third of the 19th century. Up to the revolution the American knew himself in three contexts: as Christian, English colonial, and village community member. As this scaffolding was cut away by independence, secularization, and industrial-urbanization he suffered an acute attack of inchoateness from which he still has not recovered. The landscapes of those institutions had been the stable rural countryside tightly and hierarchically ordered around the church and town, making zones upon the land and interpenetrations with the wild that changed little between 1520 and 1820.[14] In an era of rapid change we may forget how constant was American life for three centuries, and we may overlook how traumatic the collapse of that old order was.

The main body of the Hudson River School is preceded by a literature of travel and description, but more significantly by an indigenous prose and poetry (even though imitative of European themes and styles). Preëminent are the works of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant. From time immemorial the myths of creation have been presented as epic tale, perhaps would be comprehended only that way. The "legends" of Sleepy Hollow and the adventures of Natty Bumpo and Leatherstocking among the Indians were geographically explicit. It was possible, as John Trumbull did in 1810, to go to Norwich Falls in Connecticut, where Cooper had placed a climactic scene in *The Last of the Mohicans,* and to do a portrait of the place, an analysis of its character the way one would analyse a person. Trumbull was the painter of heroes and battles, whose work hangs in the Capitol in Washington. He probably painted no more than three landscapes in a busy career. The fictional heroes and events, no less than the historical, gave place to elements of American identity—for we identified with the Irving and Cooper characters.

From the "actual" sites of such places, which much of the early painting scrutinized with an almost frenetic intensity, the painters moved out in search of correspondingly dramatic sites, appropriate to the imagination of episodes of pioneering life, or even storms or mountain geology. Thomas Cole was its most fervent spokesman. He painted and wrote long essays. To be lost in the wilderness he said, was the supreme experience. It was a way of seeking one's roots, a primitive regression. Neither the eroticism nor the adolescent emotionality of his work have gone unnoticed. This sentiment for which later critics had only contempt had its purposes, for it turned Americans back to maternal themes, to the land itself in a search for their beginnings without which they would remain lost. Cynics after the Civil War saw those romantics merely as weak and undisciplined, as the Victorians considered women to be. To rhapsodize about trees and waterfalls seemed to them to have been sentimental and silly. The artist's own personalities were indeed rife with immaturity. But they were, in a sense, childish for us all.

Until then, the Europeans who settled America were on alien ground. With few exceptions their concrete connection to locality remained in Europe. The painters in America tried, in a few decades, to overhaul that whole troubled subjectivity, to imprint on our nervous systems a wild mountain spectacle as home, to do in the New World what had taken centuries in Europe. Of course they could not possibly succeed, but in some ways no concept of place and landscape in America since then has been without something of their mark.

We are reminded with painful regularity of our continuing sense of dislocation, the neuroses of personal identity problems, the terror of loneliness in the crowd, of isolation both from society and from the rest of nature. These anxieties are linked to doubts about the purpose of life, even of order in the creation. Traditional psychology, scientific humanism and even our religious preoccupation with the self have tried to explain these dilemmas of unconnectedness as arising within society and its works—in the family, the home, the job, or the church. But the failure of these explanations to either elucidate or remedy our chronic fragmentation raises doubts that man's loneliness stems from inadequate social planning or ideology, or that he makes or unmakes himself apart from a non-human gestalt.

It is easy to blame rootlessness, mobility, the fluidity of American life for our anguish, but all the hunting and gathering cultures which have ever been studied moved serenely through hundreds of miles without such troubles. Although they traveled through vast spaces there is an organismic scale about their lives, W.H. Auden once observed that for us today the mega-world of galaxy and the mini-world of the atom are real mainly in frightening ways. In "Ode to Terminus" he speaks of the Earth:

> where all visibles do have a definite
> outline they stick to and are undoubtedly
>   at rest or in motion, where lovers
>   recognize each other by their surface,
>
> where to all species except the talkative
> have been allotted the niche and diet that
>   becomes them. This, whatever micro-
>   biology may think, is the world we
>
> really live in and that saves our sanity . . .[15]

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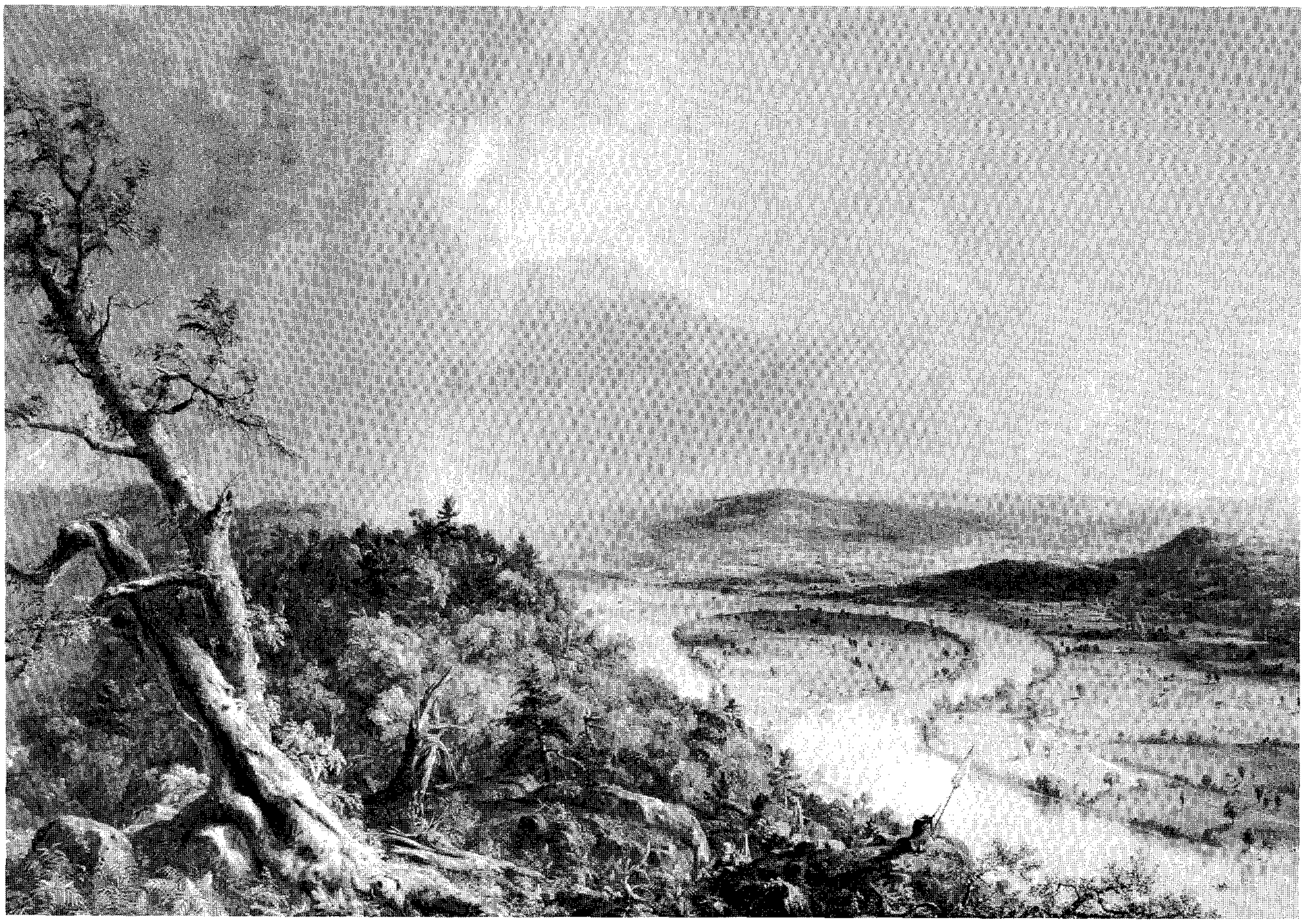
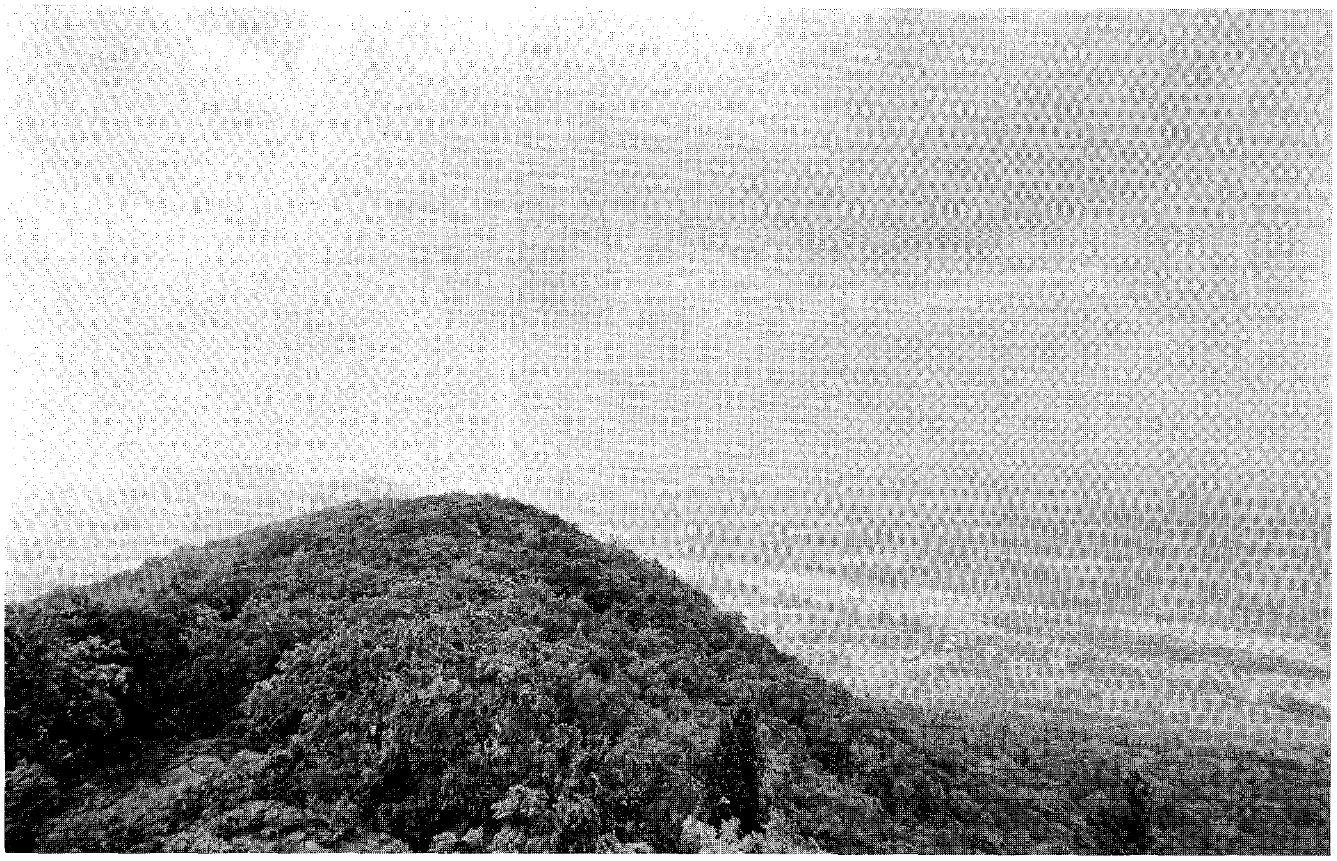
[14] J.B. Jackson, "The Westward Moving House," *Landscape* 2 (3), 1953.

[15] W.H. Auden, "Ode to Terminus," *The New York Review,* July 11, 1968.

TOP: One of Thomas Cole's best known paintings, "Oxbow," contrasts the long-settled Connecticut valley at Holyoke to the wilderness of Mt. Holyoke and Mt. Tom.

BOTTOM: The scene today, also from the Mountain House, using a 20-mm. wide-angle lens reveals how verticality and sublimity came from Cole's compressive technique.





"Saving our sanity" in this mesocosm, might well require that we forget the heaven of the other-world religions along with the Adlerian psychology of simply willing your own world as we have forgotten other tall stories.

Eliade wants us to believe that places differ according to the amount of a universal holy oil we pour on them. He is in company with the chartographers whose surveys of latitude, longitude, township and range we have also accepted as the terms of location, of "defining space." But the world is not a billiard table until we finally turn it into one. It is unique everywhere in combining differently features which, in some unknown way, both reflect and create an inner geography by which we locate the self.

However exact the mathematical, political or ecclesiastical subdivision of space may be, if it is imposed from a distant culture it cannot refer to place in the sense which is meant here, any more than maturity is achieved through ceremonies by which those institutions confer power on the individual, however much symbolic scenery they frame it in. Tyrone Guthrie, the British drama critic, once wrote of Thornton Wilder's keen sense of place in his play, "Our Town,"

> that such a close attachment to, and interpretation of a particular part of the earth is an absolute essential to any work of art which can ever be of deep or lasting significance. It is one of the paradoxes of art that a work can only be universal if it is rooted in a part of its creator which is most privately and particularly himself. Such roots must sprout not only from the people but also the places which have meant most to him in his most impressionable years.[16]

Wilder not only creates place but an instrument of its recognition and affirmation. His own experience is one of discovery. He is like Carlos Castaneda, who tells us how difficult it is for one coming from a culture of the human domination of nature to discover, even in a room 12 x 8 feet, the spot on which he could sit without fatigue. His frustrating search under the tutelage of Don Juan took all night.[17] Again one thinks of the 19th century painters on foot, roving back and forth across the White and Green mountains, the Berkshires, the Taconics, the Hudson Highlands and the Catskills searching endlessly. The heterogeneity of the land is not made by

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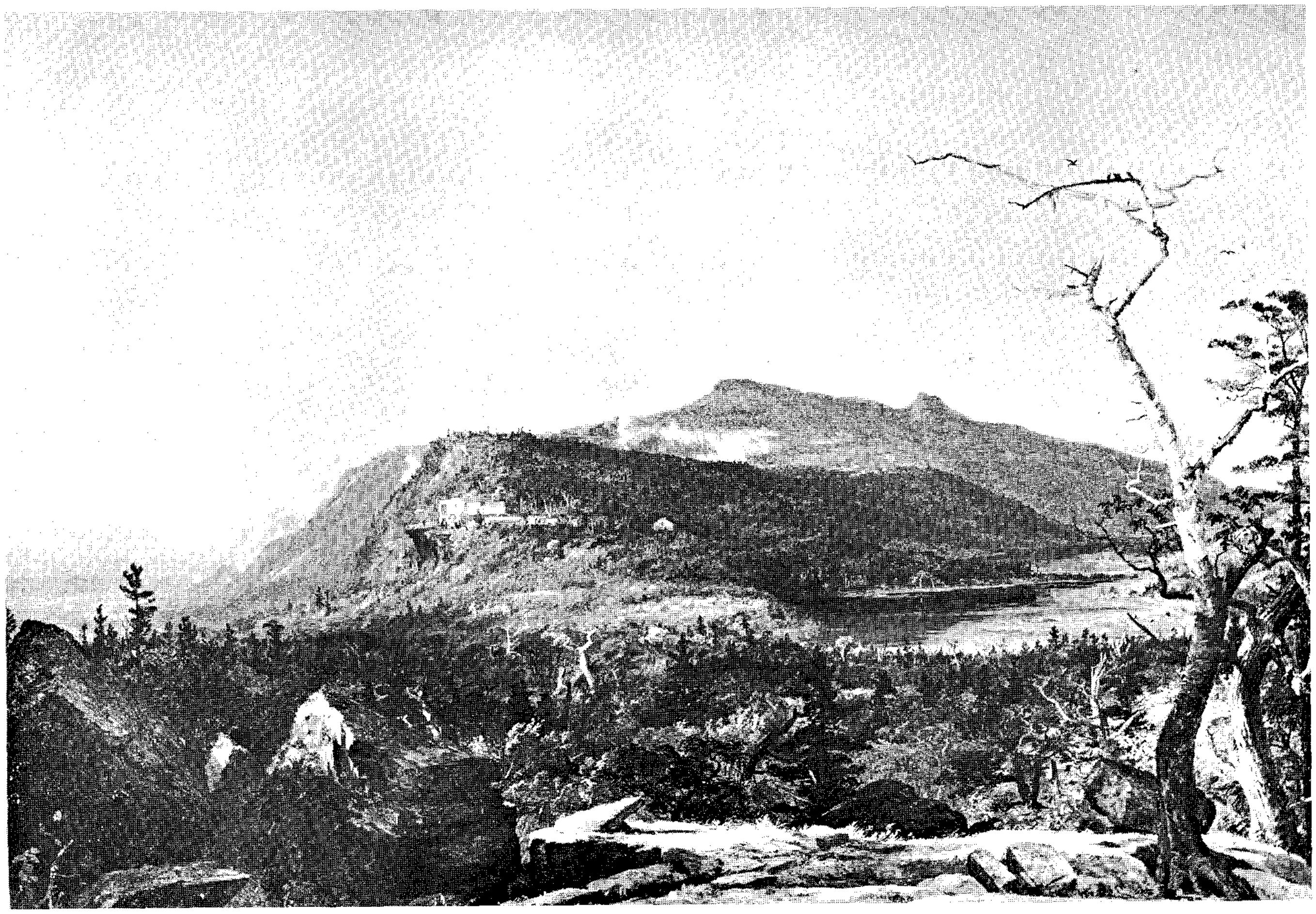
[16] Tyrone Guthrie, *The New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 27, 1955, p. 27.

[17] Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*, Los Angeles, 1968, p. 18 ff.

BELOW: Jasper Cropsey's "View of Kaaterskill House" on the Catskill escarpment, includes the most famous of the mountain houses, with High Peak and Round Top in the distance. The area around the Mountain House was celebrated in the works of Irving, Cooper, and Bryant and became the original and perhaps most hallowed place in the American wilderness.

RIGHT: The same scene in 1953, before the Mountain House was destroyed.



man—only discovered and enhanced or ignored and diminished by him.

An example of this reciprocity in which the given and the made play complementary roles is described in Jacquetta Hawkes' beautiful book, *A Land*, an exercise in the gesalt-making powers where local rock is used for architecture, as it has been in many regions of England. The mind resonates between the stone as geology or terrain and its arrangement in man-made structures, between a unique regional architecture of the earth and the constraints and opportunities it offers in style and design. She is especially sensitive to the evolution of mind and consciousness, the records of which occur as fossils in the same rocks that are used to build libraries, laboratories and churches in which to contemplate the past.

Europe, as the late May Watts observed, had its cultural history written in the regional materials. Her guidebooks to the landscapes of Europe and America are achievements of a high order because she recognized that the value of place differences was not a matter of scenery but of the interaction of people and their natural environment, a claim to which they cling despite the leveling bulldozer and pre-molded structures.[18] In America it is clearly less so than in Europe. True, there are the stone fences of Frost's New England and the grave slabs of Yankee marble, the limestone storefronts and banks of the Midwest, the sandstone campus at Boulder, and the adobes of New Mexico. Types of wood may also be identified with local architecture, though modern lumberyards have virtually lost their local connections. Wood does not last long enough to signify the earlier dependence on local trees in the way rock does. One is reminded of John Ruskin's refusal to come to America, saying that he could never visit a country which had no old castles. If you had no old castles you had no history, and if you had no history there was no place in which the events which made you sanctified the ground.

But Ruskin was inordinately attached to the picturesque, to the necessity of ruins and the moral qualities of painting. Some dimensions of place do not depend on the interpenetration of geology and architecture. In her introduction to the poetry of Carl Sandburg, Rebecca West described the loquaciousness of Americans in public, their readiness to discuss their lives with total strangers, and the leisure they take in self-explanation. She says,

> It occurs to one, as such experiences accumulate, that one has encountered in art, though not in life, people who talk and behave like this: in Russian novels. There one gets precisely the same universal addiction to self-analysis. And then it occurs to one also that this place is in certain

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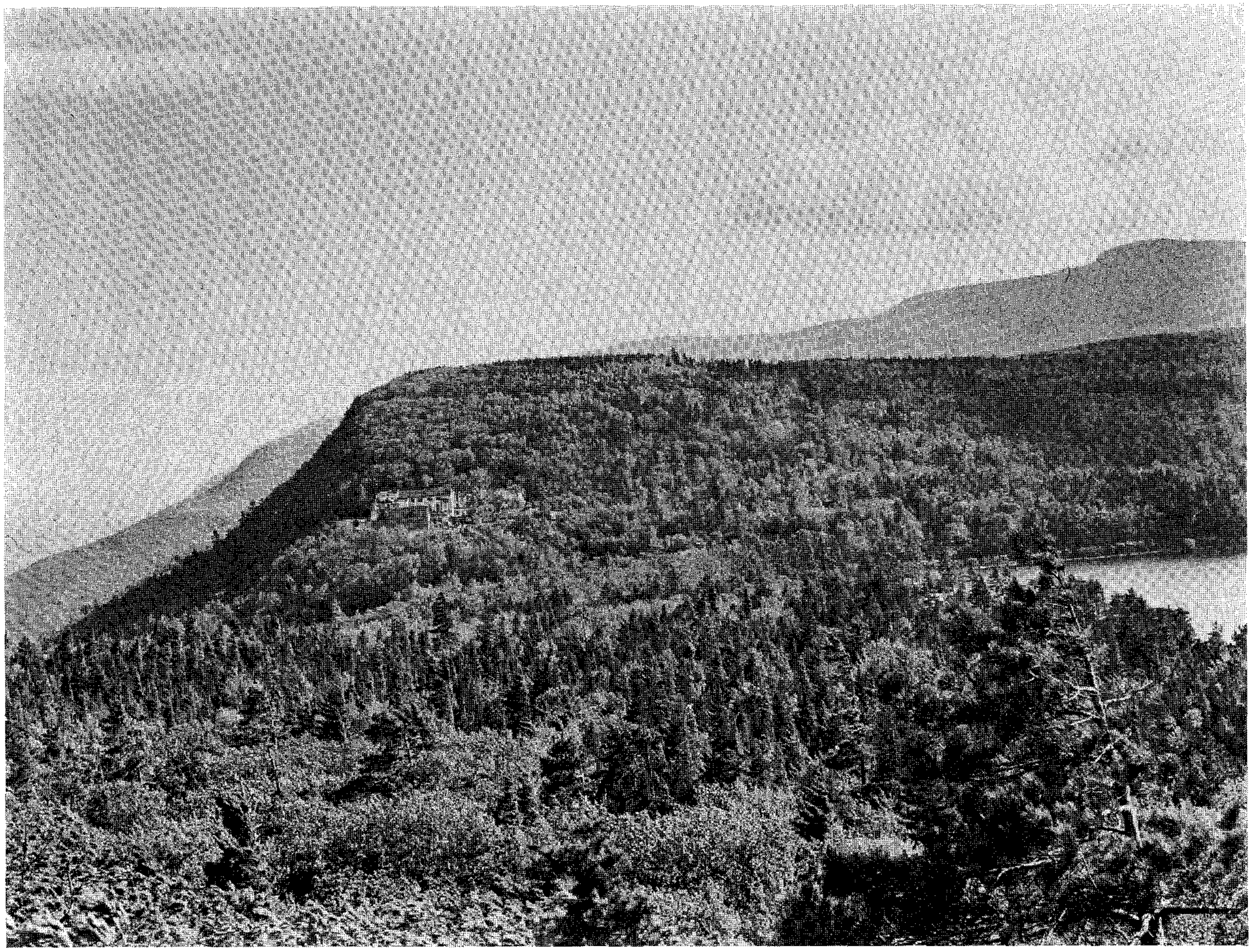
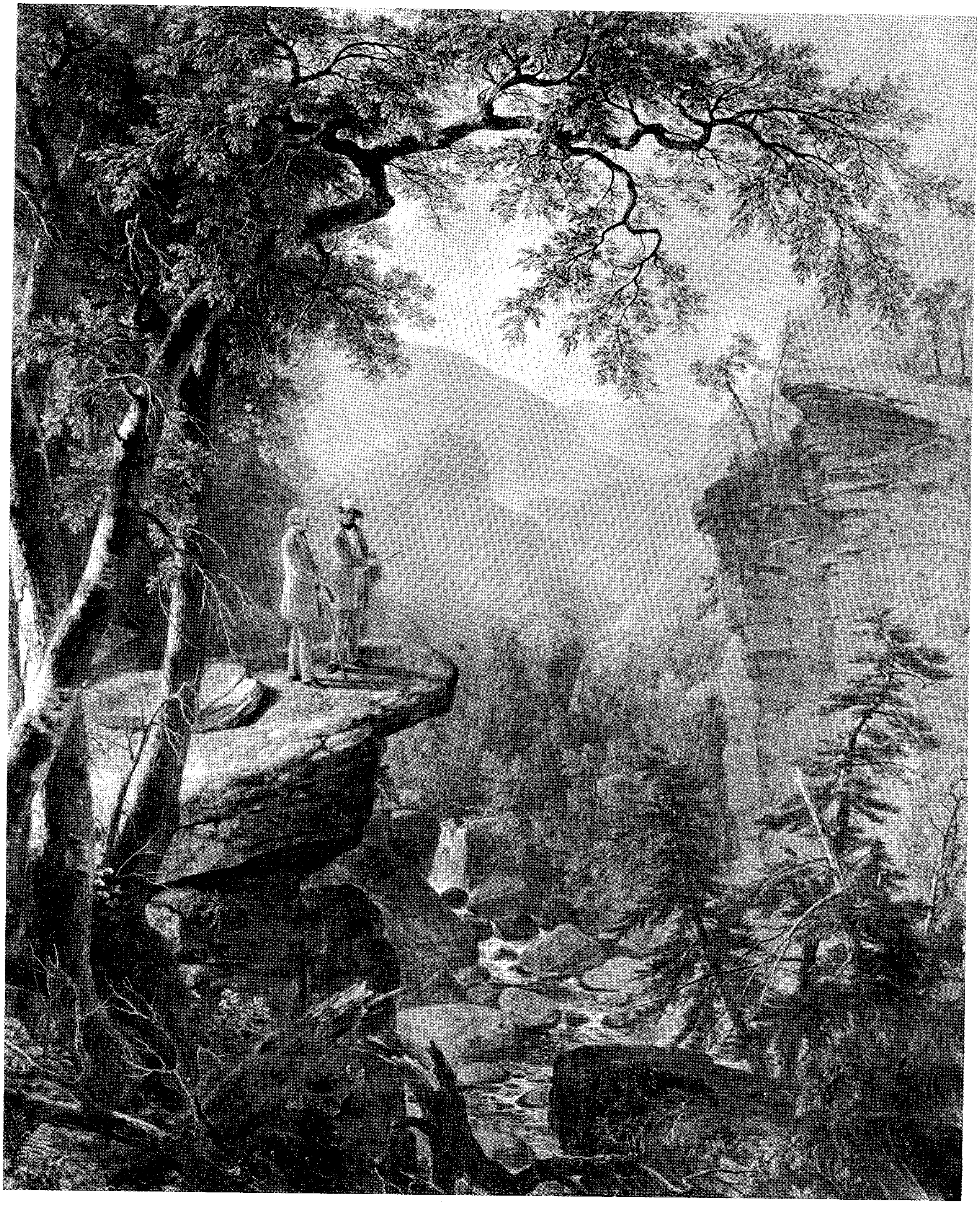
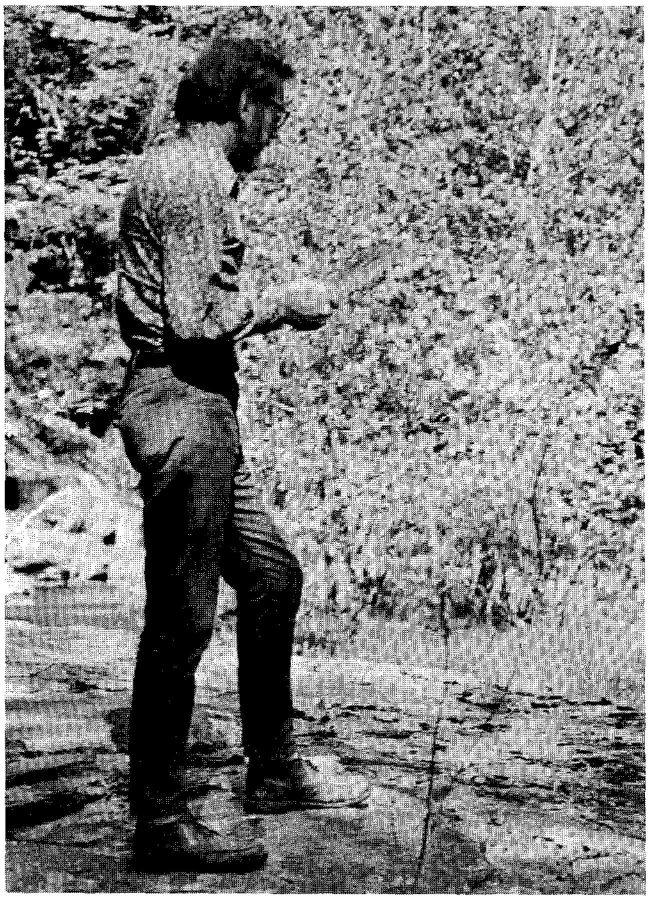
[18] May Watts, *Reading the Landscape*, New York, 1957.





ABOVE: At the foot of the Catskill Escarpment, where the Kaaterskill, coming down the clove, entered the valley of the Hudson, the old village of Palenville was the setting of Rip Van Winkle's home. A short distance up the creek Ashur B. Durand placed this symbolic meeting of William Cullen Bryant and Thomas Cole. In "Kindred Spirits" Durand epitomized the whole Hudson River School as striving to make portraits of place following literary "history."

OPPOSITE: The author stands on the same rock, now undercut and fallen into the stream bed.



respects very like Russia. Chicago, like Leningrad, like Moscow, is a high spot, to use its own idiom, on the monotony of great plains; a catchment area of vitality that rejoices extravagantly in its preservation because elsewhere in this region it might have trickled away from its source and been swallowed up in the vastness of the earth. All round Chicago lies the Middle Western plain . . . The physical resemblance between Russia and the Middle West is certainly close enough. And it may be that life which finds itself lost in the heart of a vast continent, whether that be Old or New, has a tendency to take the same forms. Life in another case, which flows in a number of channels and is divided into small nations, has an audience, who will give it a verdict on its performance, which is none the less useful if its inevitable function is to be disbelieved; and it has a basis for optimism about the universe, since it sees the neighboring nations surviving and flourishing in spite of what it is bound to consider their inferiorities. But a nation that is isolated in its vastness has no audience but itself, and it has no guarantee that continued existance is possible or worth while, save its own findings. Therefore, Russia and Middle West alike, it is committed to introspection, to a constant stocktaking of its own life and a constant search for the meaning of it . . . .

In the Middle West more than anywhere else the introspective inhabitants have developed an idiom suited for describing the events of the inner life and entirely inadequate in dealing with the events of the outer life.[19]

In celebrating Chicago and the prairies Carl Sandburg threw the raw land right back in John Ruskin's face, for the prairie and Chicago were the least esthetic places by the canons of painterly esthetics, the concept of scenery.[20] The beauty of Missouri and Illinois will never come from matching them against the abstract standards of the picturesque, but from their affirmation by people in those places, and by an integrity that is violated neither by alien esthetics nor alien machinery. The commerce that tends to blenderize the world is not just physical while its opponents are esthetic. Modern tourism is not a defender of the world's difference against the utilitarian onslaught. Recreation, leisure and art are the ministers of abstract scenery just as the centralized religions are of the abstract holy. Because of the abstract theory, a park might be established where nature happens to fit the standard. But the making of parks has been a license to surrender the rest.

Tourism and the park mentality, like that which pushed American Indians onto reservations, makes enclaves—not on the theory that quality is everywhere different, but on the theory that the alternative to dispersed points of sanctity is a continuous, weary uniformity. Sandburg was not singing parks and petrified village monuments like Lincoln's New Salem today. He belonged. Belonging, says Erik Erikson, is the pivot of life, the point at which selfhood becomes possible—not just belonging in general, but in particular. One belongs to a universe of order and purpose which must initially be *realized* as a particular society in a natural community of certain species in a terrain of unique geology. What Rebecca West sees as the empty plains of Illinois and Russia betrays her own bias, for they are empty only—as she noted—of close neighbors.

My theme can now be drawn together. It can be signified by the wandering of certain Australian aborigines. In going on the pilgrimage called walkabout, the Aborigine travels to a succession of named places, each familiar from childhood and each the place of some episode in the story of creation. The sacred qualities of each are heightened by symbolic art forms and religious relics. The journey is into the interior in every sense, as myth is the dramatic externalization of the events of an inner history. To the pilgrims these places are profoundly moving. The landscape is a kind of archive where the individual moves simultaneously through his personal and tribal past, renewing contact with crucial points, a journey into time and space refreshing the meaning of his own being.[21]

Terrain structure is the model for the patterns of cognition. As children we internalize its order as we practice "going" from thought to thought, and learn to recognize perceptions and ideas as details in the sweep of larger generalizations. We intuit these textures into a personal uniqueness. Mind has the pattern of place predicated upon it, and we describe its excursions, like this essay, as a ramble between "points," the exploration of "fields," following "paths," and finding "boundaries," "wastelands" or "jungles," of the difficulty of seeing forests for the trees, of making mountains of molehills, of the dark and light sides, of going downhill or uphill.

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[19] Carl Sandburg, *Selected Poems*, ed. Rebecca West, London, 1926.

[20] Archibald MacLeish, "Where a Poet's From," *Saturday Review*, Dec. 2, 1967.

[21] Amos Rapoport, "Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place," in Wm. Mitchell, ed. *Environmental Design: Research and Practice*, Los Angeles, 1972.

Cognition, personality, creativity, maturity—all are in some way tied to particular gestalts of space, to locality partly given and partly found.

What does this say to us as Americans? From the standpoint of society as a whole, our disadvantages seem obvious and enormous. We have little cultural continuity with the land; history has few tangible relics. The vestiges of pre-colonial art and earthworks remain, but their meanings we do not know or feel. At the time of its settlement by Europeans, the continent had vast diversity, as indicated by the diversity of Indian tribes. Almost everything we have done to it in the last two centuries has worked toward the destruction of these differences. We have idealized this uniformity in the image of the melting pot and *the* standard of living. The industrial complex levels mountains, drains swamps, opens forests, plants trees in grasslands and domesticates and exterminates the wild. We have long been aware of this and of the rejoinder that it is a small price to pay for convenience, security and comfort—that entertainment, travel, instant news, electrified homes and an unlimited array of goods are made available in this way. Diversity, in fact, is suspect because it is divisive, or at best it is said to be just one more source of pleasure in a complex equation where the theme is "trade-offs." We are doubtful and ambivalent about diversity. Phyllis McGinley put it this way:

> Since this ingenious earth began
>   To shape itself from fire and rubble;
> Since God invented man, and man
>   At once fell to, inventing trouble,
> One virtue, one subersive grace
> Has chiefly vexed the human race.
>
> One whimsical beatitude,
>   Concocted for his gain and glory,
> Has man most stoutly misconstrued
>   Of all the primal category—
> Counting no blessing, but a flaw
> That Difference is the mortal law.[22]

But the trouble is not that as a nation we lose the multifold character of a continent or lack architecture that affirms its diversity. We do not actually experience anything as a nation, but as individuals. To the corporation or bureaucracy the quality of place is merely an amenity because our mythology of collective power confirms the transcendence of the individual.

The crucial point is that the child must have a residential opportunity to soak in a place, and that the adolescent and adult must be able to return to that place to ponder the visible substrate of his own personality. Place in human genesis has this episodic quality. Knowing who you are is a quest across the first forty years of life. Knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you are. But it cannot be learned in a single stroke. This is what makes the commercial ravagement of the American countryside so tragic—not that it is changed and modernized, but that the tempo of alteration so outstrips the rhythms of individual human life.

In the 1830s it was said that hardly a Dutch house remained in Manhattan. Much of New England had been deforested by ax, fire and Merino sheep. A half-a-hundred painters went out in a furious attempt to find what might persist, attaching themselves to the most rugged terrain in their adolescent dismay and desire. In a hopeless frenzy of sheer will and stamina they tried to establish grounds for self-discovery that would perhaps be stable, the way the European countryside was, across at least a generation of time.

Everywhere in America we continue to be engaged in that unspoken drama, to know the frustrations of being unable to grow up. Samuel Beckett, in his plays, has rightly set our quandary in an empty landscape, where we wait at crossroads marked only by signposts for something to happen, surrounded by a terrain that is both featureless and meaningless.[23] Signposts do not make a *where*ness nor beliefs a *who*ness.

If we were all as alike as eggs—and as eggs in our personal genesis we *are* unaware of our identities and potential relationships—it would not matter. But we hatch into a world where everything we do can help make or unmake the possibilities for our further growth. Intellectuals or eggheads like to think that we live in a world of ideas which we invent, as we create the domestic plants and animals. But in some part of our skulls there is a wilderness. We call it the unconscious because we cannot cultivate it the way you would a field of grain or a field of thought. In it forces as enduring as climate and bedrock maintain our uniqueness in spite of the works of progress. It is the source of our private diversity. Together, our collective unconscious seems almost to exist apart from ourselves, like a great wild region where we can get in touch with the sources of life. It is a retreat where we wait out the movers and builders, who scramble continually to revamp our surroundings in search of a solution to a problem which is a result of their own activity. ☐

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[22] Phyllis McGinley, "In Praise of Diversity," *American Scholar* 23:306, 1954.

[23] Robert M. Newcomb, "Beckett's Road," *Landscape* 13 (1), 1963.

COVER: A painting by G. L. Johnson of the fundus or retina of the eye of the wolf, showing patterns of color as seen in ophthalmological observation. The colors are due to variations in reflective structure, visual purple, capillary blood vessels and pigments. The optic disc or nerve and associated blood vessels are conspicuous. The horizontal bands of color, giving it a landscape-like appearance, may be an adaptation to variations in the light coming to the eye from sky, earth, and horizon, and therefore an anatomical projection of the landscape. The split painting is the retina of the eye of the mandrill, also done by G. L. Johnson 75 years ago. In contrast to the vista-like pattern of the retina of the wolf, this retina is visually less various. The habitat of its owner is not open country and the light arriving at the retina is more uniform.

CREDITS: p. 24, Slater Museum, Norwich, Connecticut; p. 27, Metropolitan Museum of Art; p. 28, Minneapolis Institute of Arts; p. 30, New York Public Library.

ROBERTA HILL

PATTERNS

If I could track you down to have you taste
the strawberry shaded by beggar's green,
the winter wheat, remote as sunlight
through low moving clouds, we'd face
the squash blossom, fixed in its quiet temple,
and breathe in rhythm to our own beginnings.

Instead I step without your echo
over the cucumbers' tapestry of tendril
and wooly stem. The corn, my blind children, mingle with
wind and I walk naked
into their midst to let them brush my hips
with searching fingers, their cuffs alive with rain.

When I ask if they are happy,
a few by the fence whisper, "yes". It comes
through the rows, yes again
and again yes. My feet take root
in rings of corn light, the green earth
shouts more green against the weighted sky,

and under poppies of ash, patterns emerge:
lilacs collecting dark beneath the sheen of elms,
cedar buds tinting air with memories of frost,
a tanager's cry deep inside the windbreak,
my life's moiré of years. When my jailors,
these brief words, fumble with their bony keys,

I listen to the arguments of flies, to the long
drawn-out call of doves, for lessons in endurance.
Moths, twilight in their wings, dance above the oatleaf,
and I know you stand above the same muted sea,
brooding over smoke that breaks
around hollyhock's uneven pinnacles.

For a moment, we are together,
where salt-stunted trees glory in the sun, where verbena
and jasmine light the wind with clean tomorrows.
I felt us there, felt myself and not-myself there.
We lived those promises ridiculed in solemn days.
We lived with a hunger only solitude can afford.

GERALD COSTANZO

THE SACRED COWS OF LOS ANGELES

As if it had never happened,
an old Angeleno will remember
the coming of the word *smog*.

How in 1948 a meteorologist
predicted the end of the past
in four letters. How the sacred

cows brought with them traffic
lights and street signs, cross-
walks and the dotted line,

which after a while they began
to ignore. Pausing at corners
they'd drool a pool of oil

and maybe etch a rubber patch,
leaving. They were fed
whatever it took. They were washed

and shined. At night they'd idle
through La Cienega or watch
from a lovers' lane over

the cool Pacific. They'd snooze
beneath the flickering face
of the Escondido Drive-In

or sleep in garages, nestled
in the waning fumes—safe,
a few hours, from the future, safe

from the sight of the full moon,
a pomegranate resting
on the hazy lip of Los Angeles.

RICHARD SCHERR

STRIP MINING:
Toward an Understanding of Landscape

It is now official: the age of strip mining is upon us. The Carter Administration has urged the increased development of America's coal reserves to replace the dwindling supplies of oil and natural gas. Coal, in fact, will probably become the major intermediate source of energy until other forms of technology can be developed. What this will mean is an increase of strip mining activities, because stripping has proven to be the safest, quickest, and most economical process of mining coal reserves.

The primary rationale behind the Administration's proposal is that there still exist vast tracts of strippable coal in this nation. In Texas, for instance, it is estimated that over 1,000,000 acres (10.4 billion tons) of lignite, a low grade coal, lie within 200 feet of the earth's surface. Currently, there are only about 960 acres/year of this reserve being mined, but it is estimated that by 1980 lignite stripping will consume over 2,400 acres/year.[1] When one considers that even a small mining operation requires at least 10,000 acres of reserves to maintain a steam generated power plant, one begins to understand that strip mining is by its very nature a gigantic operation which will affect increasingly vast areas of our nation's land surface.

What has traditionally concerned most environmentalists about strip mining is what happens to the land after the coal has been extracted. Historically, strip mining has resulted in absolute environmental destruction; the mined pits totally transformed the landscape into a ravaged, impenetrable terrain of little aesthetic or functional value. Currently, mining companies argue—and I think rightly—that extensive reclamation practices are now carried out (largely as a response to legal pressures exerted by environmentalists) which turn the mined areas to productive uses once again. Attempts are even made to duplicate the physical qualities of the landscape (mostly in terms of general topography and vegetation) which existed before any mining operations took place. Although this has resulted in higher mining costs, reclamation practices have proven to be politically highly effective. This, along with the fact that almost every state which possesses strippable coal reserves has enacted stringent reclamation legislation, has somewhat pacified most environmentalists, who now largely seem to feel that the "battle" has been won. As the controversy has begun to subside, the way has been paved to begin the most extensive stripping operations that have ever been undertaken in this country.

But I would like to suggest that the battle has not been won at all—reclamation will *not* insure the survival of the quality of our physical environment. We have again been blinded by a terrible recurring malady which seems to be most highly attractive to Western industrial countries, whose value system enables them to understand issues reduced only to the most pragmatic, objective terms. The landscape has been understood to be a commodity—i.e., if reclamation insures continual economic production, and the land is visually inoffensive, it can't be too bad. But there exists as well a question of *aesthetic* values which must be taken into consideration, ultimately reflecting on what we understand to be the very nature and meaning of "landscape." Only with an understanding of these values will we comprehend that the issues of reclamation extend far beyond the mere future functioning of the land. I would argue, in fact, that reclamation processes represent nothing less than a total "rebirth" of the landscape on an unprecedented scale—the earth's surface has been transformed into an artificial "equivalence" of nature which has lost all vestiges of landscape's inherent qualities.

The basic problem in almost any "area" stripping operation, of course, is that the overburden (surface earth materials) must be removed in order to expose the underlying coal.[2] This is accomplished by the use of a giant electric "dragline," which operates by pulling a 70 yard or more capacity bucket toward itself, scraping off a layer of overburden, and then swinging around to dump its load into a conical pile where the coal was previously extracted.[3] The dragline then proceeds, or "walks," along in a linear path, alternately exposing the coal seam and burying the mined pit, forming a row of conical piles of overburden. The exposed pit uncovered by the dragline is around 120 feet wide, 30-200 feet in depth, and is often more than a mile long.[4] When the dragline has completed a pit, it returns again to remove the adjacent overburden into the previously emptied pit, and then the process is repeated. This "scanning" pattern thus creates a violently disturbed terrain (see photo on p. 36) consisting of parallel rows of overburden piles, each one up to 60 feet high, filling the parallel excavations removed by the dragline. Finally, once the coal is exposed, it is extracted by smaller buckets and dumped into large haulers to be transported to the power plant.

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[1] This study is based largely on research undertaken at strip mines in the Southwest which incorporate the latest and most sophisticated techniques of stripping and reclamation, and are typical of many other mining operations across the country.

[2] The other form of surface mining is called "contour" stripping, which occurs on mountainous topography. Here, coal is mined along the side of a hill, a process which results in even more severe disruption (clearly evident in the Appalachian regions of the United States), and the land is extremely difficult to reclaim.

[3] These draglines weigh as much as five million pounds with a boom 285 feet in length, and are capable of removing over 150,000 cubic yards (approx. 2½ acres) of overburden in a 24 hour period.

[4] The size of the pit is determined by the boom length of the dragline and the relative depth of the coal seam; the extensive length of most pits is encouraged, to reduce the time and expense of turning and/or transporting the dragline to a new location.

The processes of land reclamation for strip mining operations will vary according to a number of locational factors, including differences in topography, climate, soil qualities, and the previous functioning and value of the land. The most important factors to consider at all mines are topography and annual rainfall; it can generally be said that the steeper the topography and the lower the yearly rainfall,the greater the difficulty of reclaiming the land.[5] In any case, most reclamation efforts proceed by two basic steps: first, the 60 foot high overburden piles must be graded down to a relatively flat, or inclined slope (usually not to exceed 15%) which, at the very least, can be machined for grazing purposes. The intial rough grading of the piles is handled by wide-bladed bulldozers; later, surface graders come in to finish the final leveling. This process goes on concurrently with the surface stripping taking place several pits away. Thus, one finds an alternate mounding and leveling movement of earth continuously sweeping across the lignite field perpendicular to the mined pits (see photo).

The second phase of reclamation involves the re-vegetation of the surface soils, usually a duplication of the original grasses indigenous to an area. This adds needed nutrients to the overburden, and helps to stabilize the land against surface erosion. While the new surface soils, which are "rotated" from as far as 80 feet below the earth's surface, are found to have no genetic background (i.e. no bacteriological content), it has been found that new organisms quickly infiltrate the overburden when it is exposed to air, thus helping to support plant germination. This whole cycle, from previous agricultural production, to strip mining, contouring, revegetation, and back again to agricultural production usually takes about 2½ years to complete.

None of this sounds too terribly destructive. On a functional level, the land seems to have been "saved;" through reclamation, the land performs, and sometimes even vaguely *looks,* as it did before. Except for a 2½ year period of disturbance, one might not even realize that a mining operation had taken place. But this, I maintain, is not the issue.

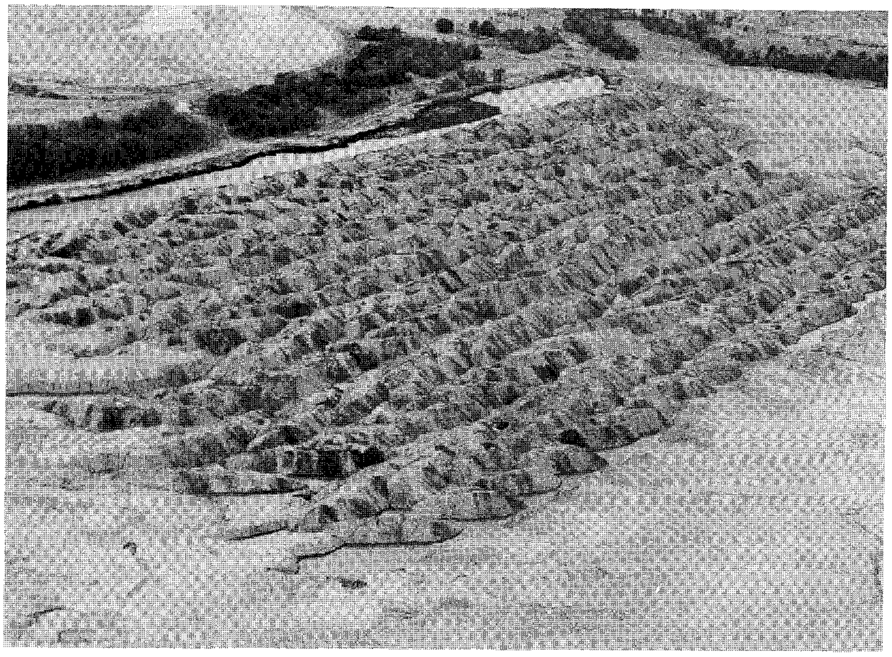
Landscape is surely more than merely a physical substance, containing a variety of materials formed by natural or man-made processes. More to the point, I believe, is the notion that landscape is a phenomenon which can be described in terms of fulfilling certain primary, or recurring conditions, characteristic of a particular locality or environment. Let me outline only several examples of what I believe are these basic qualities:

1. The visual quality of landscape is an organically composed, dynamic order; its vitality is based on a complex mixture of highly specific, detailed incidents. Nature revels in chance, or accidental relationships between a wide variety of elements. Examples include the unpredictable mixture of plant growth by the blown circulation of seeds, varied densities of growth over changing drainage/soil patterns, changing rates of aging and decay of different kinds of plant and animal life, and other complex phenomena. It is in the minute, often subtle visual differences, such as a fallen log in a forest, or the amorphous edge between earth and water, which give the various portions of the landscape a quality of individuality and identity within the sense of the whole. Often, these differences manifest themselves even more clearly when the landscape has evolved over a long period of time, so as to allow a wider variety of elements to exist together, sometimes contradicting one another while still maintaining a sense of visual logic based on an ecological, rather than a compositional, order.

2. The landscape is a complex system of interacting forms and processes which exist in a continual state of dependence and adjustment with one another. This interaction can be described as a quality of "contingency" (response), in which various man-made and natural systems are dependent on, or are a result of, other generating systems, so that a condition of environmental "fit" (agreement) between the two or more systems occurs. Contingent states must always occur if the landscape is to evolve and perpetuate itself without existing at the expense of any other system. One example of a contingent condition in the landscape is crop farming, in which successful vegetation is totally dependent upon local soil types, water resources, topography, temperature, quantities of rain, sun, wind, and other climatic conditions. The most appropriate crop is chosen for a given set of circumstances; the higher the degree of fit, the higher the resulting yield. Or, in the construction of a road through mountainous terrain, a route is chosen which requires the least cut and fill, bridging, or blasting, resulting in a linear form which follows the contour of the mountain.

On the other hand, when certain "foreign" man-made systems are imposed on the landscape, a condition of "mis-fit" (dissonance) between the two or more systems occurs. For instance, when earth has been re-graded beyond a certain

A stripped field of remaining overburden mounds—note flattened edge where grading has begun.



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[5] Thus, the far greater difficulty of reclaiming the hilly Appalachian contexts, or such arid areas as in New Mexico and Arizona.

degree of slope, the water runoff will begin to cause surface erosion; or, when the amount of sewage dumped into a river is beyond that which can be biologically reduced through oxidation, the natural system becomes overloaded, resulting in the river's gradual pollution.

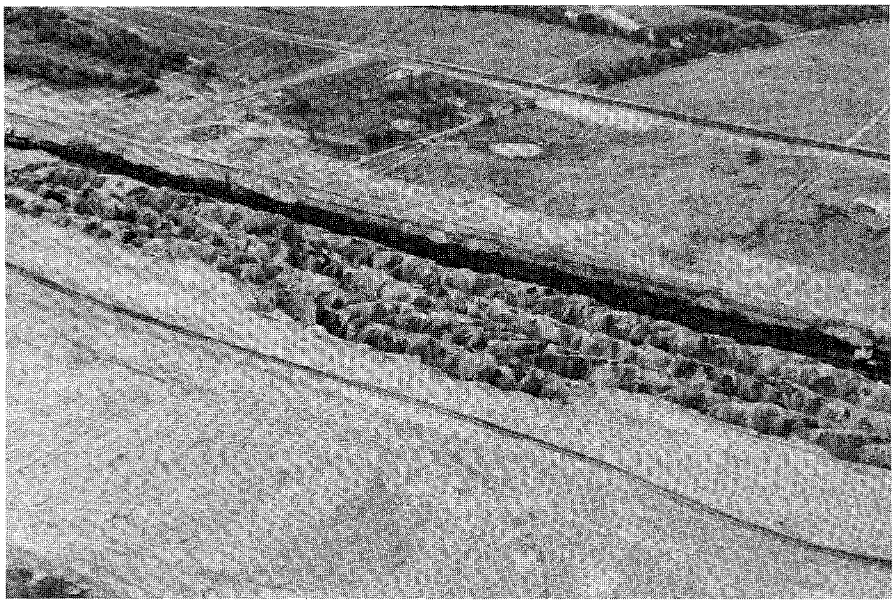
3. The landscape is a repository of specific, remembered events which are associated with particular artifacts located within the landscape. This form of "memory" is a sense of historical documentation which has been built up over a long evolution of natural change and human contact. Memory is also a rather ephemeral mechanism—while a thought may remain in the minds of those who have encountered a particular event, it must be represented in a tangible, physical "sign" of that thought if it is to be communicated to those who weren't directly associated with the past event, and to be maintained long after the death of those who were. These signs exist in all of the various elements experienced in the landscape, such as the house where one lived, the special tree one climbed, the pool where one waded, the path one walked, etc. These events may be trivial or important, but all of them give the landscape a sense of mythic, or "cultural" background which only lasts so long as the artifacts of the landscape remain as well.

4. The landscape always evolves within a temporal context which is a continuous, successive gradation. Time, of course, is a linear phenomenon—there are no gaps, or discontinuities, within its passage into the future. As obvious as this may seem, it is an important notion—the progressive displacement of time allows for the aging of the landscape to occur, which in turn insures that various biological processes, often operating in a recurrent or cyclical way, may be continued. Thus, the constancy and predictability of nature's temporal pattern helps to insure that the species perpetuates itself and allows any improper balance which may arise ecologically to adjust itself.

Although this description is incomplete, one can analyze the characteristics of strip mining and reclamation and compare them to the criteria of landscape's qualities I have outlined. Unfortunately, the result of a point by point comparison quickly becomes a polarization—the act of strip mining is a denial of landscape's qualities, clearly destructive to the forms and processes of the original environment:

1a. In a stripping/reclamation operation, the visual order of the landscape is inalterably changed. All surface growth has been removed, including large areas of developed forest which will be impossible to replace. The topography created after re-grading is also different from the original; it is impossible exactly to match the original contours of the land. One's general visual impression of a reclaimed stripping operation is of a continually rolling, bare topography which has a consistently repetitive form throughout the entire field (see photo). Any abrupt changes of topography, variations of vegetation, fallen trees, or other irregularities of nature have been removed from the context. All the specificity, contradiction, and individuality, however subtle, of the original landscape has been neutralized into a totally controlled sameness. All accident is equalized into a man-made "perfection" where, through the absolute control inherent in large-scale technological processes, all portions of the new landscape functionally perform, and are visually perceived, equally. The land may once again become economically viable, but the physical result is repetitive, predictable, and excruciatingly boring. Here is not the dynamic order of nature, but rather the total, composed order of an artificial product—landscape turned into manscape.

All phases of strip mining successively represented; from foreground to background—grading, excavated pits, open pit, and area left to be mined.



2b. The structure of a strip mining operation bears absolutely no relationship (is *non*-contingent) to any systems or elements of the surface landscape. This is most obviously seen at the edge condition of the mined areas, where the sudden change of surface texture, without any visual transition, emphasizes the total lack of relation, or fit, between the mine and the surrounding landscape (see photo). With almost no exception, the mining plan is developed continually wherever adequate, retrievable reserves of coal lie—irrespective of *any* existing artifact or natural condition occurring over the coal field, whether it be an existing building, fence, forest, drainage pattern, soil type, boundary of ownership, or topographic change on the surface landscape.[6] Thus the shape or limit of the mining field usually becomes the same shape as the potential coal reserves lying underground.

Perhaps the most crucial discrepancy between the mining and landscape systems is the vast difference in *scale* between industrial and natural forms. The magnitude of the "cut" (120 foot wide pits expanding at a rate of 500 yards a day, 70 cubic yards of overburden extracted from each scoop of the dragline) totally consumes smaller, more detailed surface incident. Buildings, trees, or hills are simply too small and insignificant to "go around" in an efficient stripping operation; the technological processes involved proceed at a vastly different degree of magnitude, and are incapable of responding to any local inputs generated by the landscape. Any semblance of mediation, or adjustment between man-made and natural systems through mutual dependence cannot take place; the result is an environmental "misfit"—landscape has been *consumed* by manscape.

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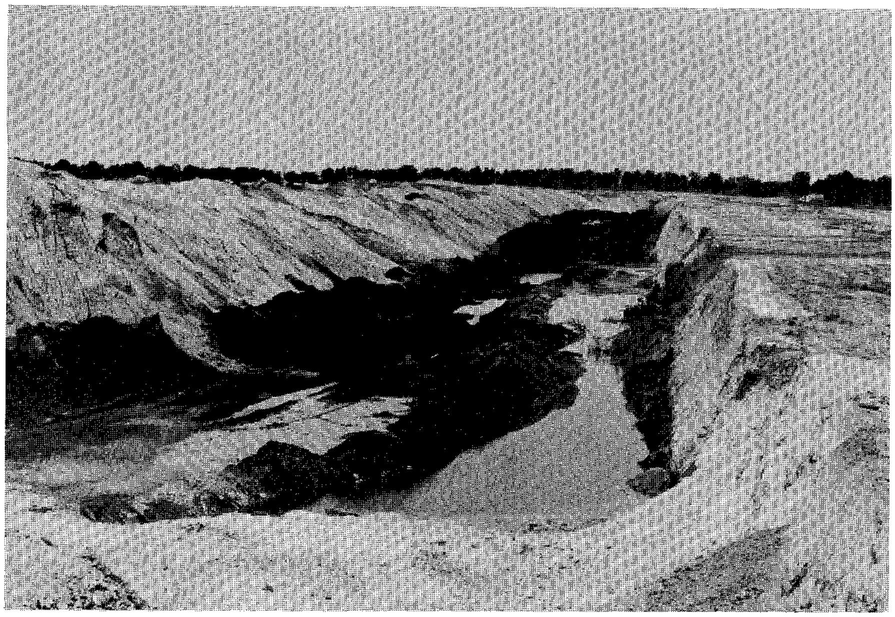
[6] At one Southwestern lignite field, the mine operators have even received permission to re-route an existing state highway situated over the lignite field! The only exception I have been able to discover (besides the legal barriers against removing an existing cemetery) occurs at the Navajo Mine near Fruitland, New Mexico, in which the mining plan has been interrupted because of several discovered archeological sites on the Navajo Reservation which must be excavated before mining may proceed.

3c. The most brutal quality of the strip mining process is its ability to "erase." There are a number of possible connotations of the word as defined by dictionaries. One definition, for instance, "to rub or scrape out," is observed quite literally as the overburden mounds are physically smoothed over into a flat, empty plane during reclamation procedures. But another meaning, as "to remove from existance or memory," implies something much more serious. Surely, when one erases a sentence from a sheet of paper, one is doing more than simply removing a quantity of graphite mass from a white surface. One is also removing all vestiges of content which were symbolized by the printed word as well. In the same way, when the stripping process removes all of the landscape elements (the farmhouse, path, waterhole, fence) along its path, one is also removing the *memory* of associated events contained within those elements. The land's original surface has actually been denuded of its content, and perhaps its true significance. This transformation of the landscape thus represents a "deprogramming" of the land; all its past history and sense of myth, built up over a long evolution of natural change and human contact, is lost practically in an instant.


The opened pit, showing from right to left, the high wall, exposed lignite, and removed overburden.

4d. Within the strip mining process exists a phenomenon which clearly disturbs the continous linearity of normal temporal flow. The lower overburden lying above the coal seam is actually dormant—no organic life exists within this material—so that the passage of time can be described as being "suspended." In the process of removal of the overburden, the earth which existed 80 or more feet below the original surface is *reversed*, now becoming the new surface. Thus, the flow of time has been broken; the evolution of the original surface landscape is discontinued, and the long dormant underlying material begins the intial process of aging. The land must actually be reborn, starting from nothing, having no history of previous human or organic contact interacting with its surface. The reclaimed land's very first beginning is its intial contact with the earth's atmosphere, which begins the process of bacterial growth and eventual germination.[8] Of course, the adjacent unmined landscape retains its original characteristics, and temporal flow continues uninterrupted. Thus, the sur-

Edge of mine field adjacent to existing landscape.

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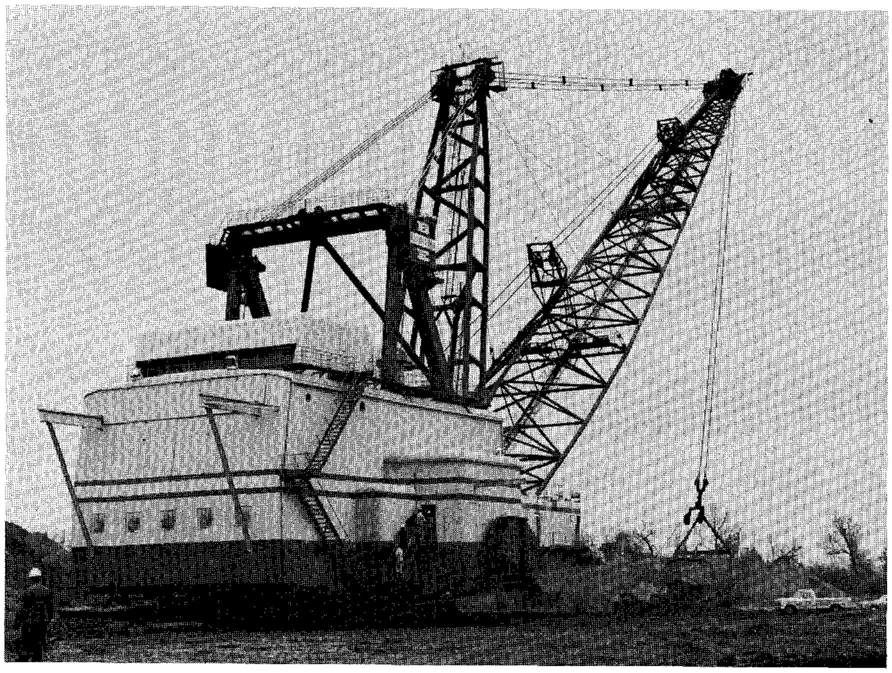
7. An interesting comparison can be made here to a similar form of drastic environmental change that erases one context and replaces it with another: the "urban renewal" processes which have been used to redevelop large areas within our central cities.

[8] Mining officials appropriately call this recaimed overburden "virgin earth."



The giant dragline used to remove overburden from the lignite seam.

rounding undisturbed landscape and the reclaimed area continue to age from two completely different reference points in time, creating an evolutionary gap along the edge between the two contexts.

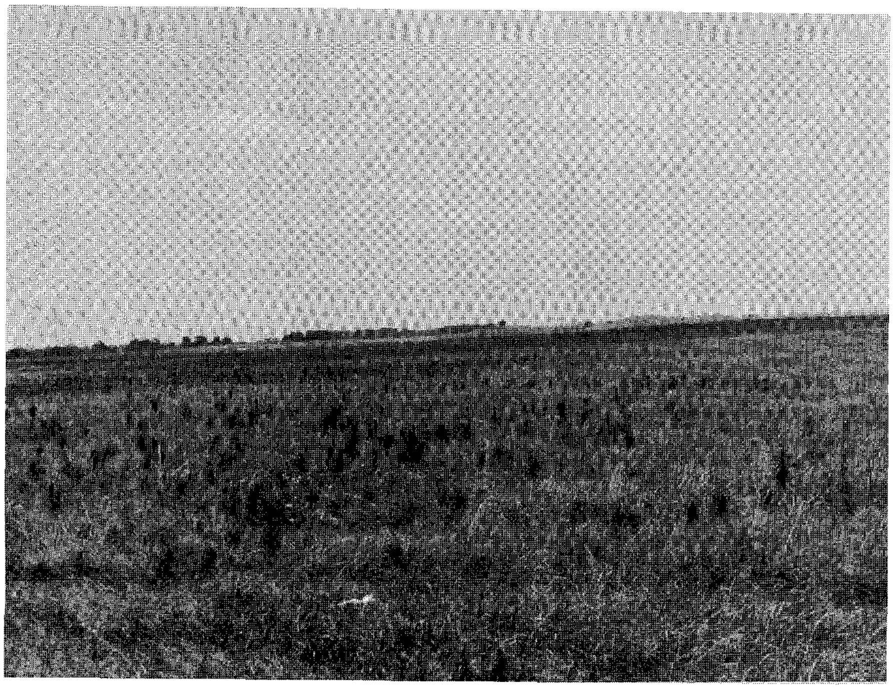
It should by now be clear that even after the strip mine has been reclaimed, it can never again be "landscape." Reclamation is not the panacea we have been led to believe; it only succeeds in achieving an artificial, albeit productive, equivalence of the original landscape. One can only conclude that strip mining and reclamation processes represent a vast confrontation/manipulation of the surface of the earth, in which the natural conditions of the land have been changed by an interaction with completely foreign, industrial forces.

But what can one propose? Surely strip mining will—and probably must—continue. The concerns I have outlined can never realistically stand up to the objective need for increased coal production to keep up with our energy demands and to the accepted fact that reclamation does succeed in turning the land into a productive commodity once again. We are faced, actually, with a traditional conflict of priorities—how can one measure qualitative values of maintaining the evolution of our landscape against the the quantitative needs necessary to maintain our way of life? The battle between aesthetic sensibility and functional pragmatism has been waged many times; in this country, and in these times, at least, aesthetic sensibility usually loses.

Let me suggest just one possible compromise. At the very least, we must seriously consider criteria to measure the relative value of different landscape contexts. Such criteria should include the number/importance of historical artifacts, proximity to populated areas, extremes of topography, density and variety of natural vegetation/animal life, visual richness, and other parameters. One could then begin objectively to "score" the relative combined values found in these contexts containing coal reserves, and determine which areas possess high enough positive characteristics to promote their conservation as open, undisturbed land, and which parcels are not so highly valued, permitting strip mining to occur.

What I am proposing is that we must begin more precisely to measure and document the *other* values of our landscape besides mere economic yield, and begin to inventory those natural resources of significant value to receive preservation designation. This is surely not a radical idea—the concept of Open Space Zoning is a legal tool which almost all municipalities in this country have the power to enforce. But it will demand another set of values, and, admittedly, some courageous political support, before such a policy is put into effect. Perhaps much strip mining development would not (and should not) be hindered by this proposal—but at least some of the natural resources which strip mining threatens to disturb in the future could be preserved and allowed to evolve. ☐

Mine field which has been re-vegetated, showing completed reclamation.



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A STORY BY BARRY TARGAN

MORDECAI'S ROCK

Mordecai stood in water to his knees in the hard blue stream flinging arching arabesques and filigrees of tapered fly line backward and forward into the morning sky, the line writing in graceful calligraphy an incantation making this world still and waiting. On the third cast he brought the rod down, dropping the slight fly six inches from the east of the house-large boulder upon which the stream broke into two. The fly floated in the small slick of protected slack water three poised seconds and then was gently gone into a glimmering and widening ring. Mordecai tipped his rod and the trout dove down and up stream, swinging to the safe side of the boulder, until Mordecai eased it away, turned it and drew it toward him.

In two minutes the twelve-inch brook trout rolled about in its own exhausted wake. Mordecai released the trout while it was still in the water. First he stroked it across the belly and then he turned the hook out of the small torn hole it had ripped in the thin flesh of the lip. There were other tears. He supported the trout in his palm, resting it, facing it into the current. When he lowered his hand, the trout, caught up in the current, lived again and was gone.

"Until tomorrow," Mordecai said after the trout. Keeping his feet firm, he turned his upper torso toward the four men standing upon the south bank opposite. There was only enough room for them between the thick barrier of scrub maple, riverbank willows and beech and ash and elm and water. "I took him on a #12 Adams with the wings cut down by half. The size doesn't matter to him. That trout has got himself trained. I've seen it happen. Something is broken in him. His instinct is gone. He'll eat anything. Now over there," he indicated with his head the far bank of the stream forty feet across, "if you can get a small dull streamer into the undercut, you can take some big browns." He turned away from them and worked at his tackle, replacing the small dry fly with a larger streamer.

It did not seem to the men watching that he could cast into the undercut on the far bank, deep as it was beneath the flickering willows combing the stream surface, but Mordecai did it, throwing his line between the thin, leafy branches like a knife. The streamer dropped into the roiled and chopped water and then sank and in ten feet of swift deep drift the leader and line hesitated and then straightened as Mordecai plucked at his line and set the hook into the fine trout that ten minutes later he brought up to the surface of the water at his feet. He released the fish and turned to the men again.

"Now here is how you fool trout into feeding. You make them think a hatch is on." He replaced the streamer with a small cream variant and shifted the rod to his left hand. He moved his left leg back so that his body angled toward the south bank and the waiting men. But even as the fly touched the water, Mordecai lifted it back and dropped it down again, nearly on the same spot. And again and again he lifted and dropped the dimpling fly like a soft rain falling.

"Up, up," he commanded and a trout rose out of the water to the perched fly and its barb and the short battle.

The men watched and one man raised his hat to wipe his brow, though it was dry.

Praise him.

One of the four men had fished in this stream for twenty years. Only Mordecai had fished there longer, longer even than any of them could tell. Albertson said,

"I remember when he would fish the whole stream, but even then he would fish that rock mostly. Now that's all he fishes. I think."

None could be certain. None had ever come here that Mordecai was not here, too. At the rock. Mordecai's rock. But none came here all of the time, and perhaps in his secret hours Mordecai still moved about and through the nameless stream.

This stream was a tributary of the trout-historied Battenkill that flowed out of Vermont across into New York and finally into the Hudson near Saratoga, but the tributary was unknown. Its entry into the Battenkill was not evident, a narrow, slight trickle into the larger river, one more of a dozen such feeder streams that men knew led up into the steep mountains and into nearly barren and stunted pools or into nothing at all. But a thousand feet through this thicket-bound tributary, the mountain cleaved and the stream widened and the few men who knew that found in lucid fact what the immemorial fisherman had made his myths upon—that place where triumph could be equal to endeavor endlessly.

Albertson said, "He doesn't look much older now than when I first met him. *I* look older, but not him. What do you think he is?"

"Sixty?" one of them said. Albertson said,

"Couldn't be. He was old when I first came here twenty years ago. But he couldn't be eighty either, could he? Not as he moves about."

"It's a wonder," one of the men said.

They sat around a fisherman's fire, a small building of fire in a ring of rocks, burning for the light of it, for the place it gave them in the large obliterating night that was all around. They were not so far from the highway, from Arlington in Vermont or Cambridge in New York, that they could not have stayed in a motel, rising early for the morning hatches, staying late for the evening's, resting in the hot and bright and placid afternoon when the trout were low and uninterested and only a Mordecai could will them to be otherwise. That was what many of the fishermen up from cities somewhere did. That or they camped variously where they could along the Battenkill.

But these men did not want to risk the stream. Four men going in and out of it for four days in late June would be a chance too great. So they came in, one by one and an hour apart, and with a few supplies, sparse and poorly determined, prepared for the chill night and limited food, accepting it. And, like a shriving, four days later, in the boisterous and returning automobile, while they remembered for each other every drift of their patterns across each possible holding point, they would not be hungry or sore-boned but cleaned and tightened. For four days their bodies had belonged to them again, and the dross of worldly comfort had been scoured off by the abrasive necessity of their secret act. They were cleaner now than after a day of work, washed in the benison of a passion.

In the car Albertson would say,

"I could have stayed. I could have gone on in there forever. Like Mordecai." That is how it had always been as they returned down the state to home and the ordinary ways.

Others knew the stream. There would be signs of them. Roughened places by the stream where they had slept and eaten. Other fire rings of stones, buried refuse, booted footprints in the bankside mud, tackle and gear broken and lost. Sometimes, even, men would encounter each other, startling themselves as if each were apparitional, surprising and, each to each, wrong to be here in the secret place, alien until they would sit together on the bank and talk. One could tell by how the other spoke what he had come for, here to the holy stream which had for uncounted years rilled perfectly through the mountain cleft undefiled.

Until the third day.

They sat on a finger of rock pointed down from the flow of the stream. All morning and until two o'clock the fishing had been perfect, *Iron humerelis* and *Stenonema vicarium* hatching up through the ice-clear water like prediction. Now the sun of the brightening day was high enough to be on all the pools, and still trout humped and bulged the water all along the main runs and in the important pockets, driving down on the now occasional sub-imagos, the newly born flies as they struggled to the surface, but the men sat and rested and listened. Mordecai was instructing them. He stood at the tip of the rocky finger, white and druidical.

He gestured with his arms stretched out to the stream rustling behind him. Against his colorless hair already his skin was tight and sun-cured as if after a summer on the stream. He had been out since April. Every day. Perhaps even in the winter he might come to read and study and contemplate the verses of the stream.

"Control is everything," he said. "When you are ready, you should try to make the true cast once to any fish you can see, and take him. You should make yourself do that. If you miss, move on." He rose up. "Control. Decide everything first. You must make the trout obey you." He turned from them quickly to the stream. "See." He pointed. Five feet behind a mid-stream rock a trout had risen to sip in a hatched fly riding down on its split husk drying its new wings. "Watch." In ten seconds the fish rose again exactly where it had been before. Every ten seconds it rose and fell. Trout fishermen knew this and cast to the rise. But Mordecai said, "Don't wait to cast to the rise. Cast half again as much. Fix a rhythmn over the fish. Then, when you are ready, make the true cast, the only one. Here." He took his rod and tied on to the leader a fly he showed them. "See. There is no hook at all. Only the makings on a shank, but no hook. I can't take the fish with this. But I can tell by the strike if I could have. Taking the fish is nothing, the idea. . . ." He did not finish. In three miraculous movements he had worked the line he needed out to the rock and hovered the fly above the ring the trout had left. Eight times evenly he did that, then, "Now," he said, dropping the fly on the water and the trout burst at the fly and spit it out and was gone. "Mine," Mordecai said. He brought in his line and leaned his rod back against a branch and came and sat with the men. "That is the best fishing of all," he said to them, "the idea of it." One of the men handed him a cup of coffee from a large thermos.

Albertson said,

"That's too fine for me. I'd never get so good." The others nodded.

"Yes," Mordecai said.

"Hi," the man shouted. At first they did not hear him over the stream. He was on the far side of it. "Hi," he shouted again and waved at them, his arm and then his rod. He started to wade across. He was no good at it. Inexperienced. Awkward. Fifteen feet from them he went down. The water poured over the top of his waders, but he rose before the waders could fill. He dragged himself to the bank, kicking the stream to pieces there.

"Christ," he said, and laughed. He started to peel himself out of his waders and then his clothes. "Hell of a thing," he said. "I'd hate to go down in the middle out there." He twisted as much water as he could out of his clothes and got back into them, wincing at the sodden cold.

One of the men said,

"How did you get here?"

"Here?" he said.

He did not know. No one answered.

"How are you doing? Catch much?" he asked.

"A few," one of the men said.

"Hey, look at this." He scrambled over to his outsized creel and dragged it back to them. He opened it. "Six this size already and maybe ten more smaller I threw back. With fish like this around who needs smaller, right?" He laughed. "What are you using? This is what I'm using." He went back to his rod and brought it over to them with the heavy American March Brown fly tied to it. "The guy at the tackle shop on the road said to use it wet or dry. Me, what do I know? All I know is, it works. I'm new to this kind of fishing. I take all the advice I can get." He laughed again. "Hey, anybody got a dry cigarette?"

Each of them shook his head. Mordecai looked away. They sat quietly, only the man, shivering himself warm, talked on.

"This is only the third time for me. Trout fishing with these flies and all. I'm not so good at the casting yet. Or the wading." He laughed high and vibrating. A bluejay above them laughed back. "In fact I never caught anything until today. What a place, huh? You been here before?" He said it out to where they all were. "Wait till I tell my buddies. I got some old bait-fishing buddies who'll die when they see this." He kicked at his creel. Mordecai stood up. He took his rod from the resting branch and was gone.

The man talked on. He did not notice that he was talking

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alone. At last the others rose, two starting upstream, two down. The man began to get up.

"Hey, I'll go with you," he said to both, to either group. Albertson said,

"No. You stay here. It's good here. You'll do better here than anywhere. From here on down to the river. Don't fish further up." Albertson walked off. He was almost gone into the bankside tangle when the man shouted after him.

"Why not?"

Albertson could have walked on, could have not heard the man and left him. But he turned and threaded back through the thick growth. He walked up close to the man.

"It's dangerous up there," Albertson said. "The stream. You're not so good at wading yet. It's worse up there than here. Do you understand?"

"Sure," the man said. "And thanks. I'll be careful."

Albertson turned back. He had told him.

The man fished upstream after all. They talked about it around their fire that night.

"Right by the rock," one of the men said. "And all around it, kicking and thrashing like you never saw."

"Mordecai?" Albertson asked.

"He saw it all. He was on the bank and watched it all."

"Well," one of them said. "It was bound to come. Sooner or later. There's nothing to stop it." They nodded.

"Hell, it won't be so bad," one of them said. "It's a good stream and the state will protect it right along with the rest of the Battenkill. It won't be so bad."

"But it won't be so perfect anymore," Albertson said.

The small fire burned down. They were reabsorbed into the night and the silence of the white, rushing stream. They slid into their sleeping bags. Tomorrow was the final day. The last thing Albertson heard was a screech owl shrieking, muffled and distant.

They woke to the twittering of the dawn, the birds crowding and fluttering about the stream. Their plan for this final day was for all of them to fish down stream and then out into the Battenkill itself and down it to the farm where they had left the car. They would eat on the road on the drive home.

This day, even more so than the three before it, was like the image of trouting that the men carried in them, like something to be born, all winter. The kind of day they counted upon to take them through the winter next where dream and memory merged. Here was when they found the problems they charted out tactics against, the twists and subtle runs and impossible undercuts, the inaccessible pools, the sudden break in the clouds that burned the fish away, the gusts of unidentifiable insects, the temperature breaking quickly upward. This was a day when they came closest to what Mordecai had meant, where time and the trout and the stream and the man and the earth itself coalesced into a green thought in a green shade in which nothing more could enter ever again.

Albertson saw him, bumping head first against the bone-smooth oak that had fallen across the stream ten years before, his booted feet riding higher, ballooned up by the bubble of air that had been trapped under the torrent that had captured him. The four men were lined out on either side of the stream about one hundred yards apart, Albertson first. He signaled to the man behind him to come. Soon they were gathered near the body rising and bumping softly to the stream's rhythmic heave and pulse.

When they pulled him out they found one of Mordecai's flies, the Adams with the cut-down wings, hooked into the man's fishing vest. A gift.

Albertson said.

"I'll be back." He left his tackle and gear and started upstream.

By the rock he found Mordecai.

"Mordecai," Albertson shouted out to him. "Mordecai," he shouted again and again over the stream until he turned. Albertson cupped his hands to be clear. "Mordecai. That man? Yesterday? We found him dead. Drowned. At the end of the stream." Mordecai looked at him. "Mordecai, do you hear me? Do you understand?" Mordecai turned away and lifted his rod back into action. Then Albertson saw that he was fishing with no line at all, only with the gesturing rod and with his knowledge and a skill as infinite as doom, casting nothing backward and forward, abstract enough at last.

Then Albertson went back to where the others were waiting for him with the terrible burden. ☐

LINDA SCHREVENS

IN CONVERSATION HOW TO SAY

to my mother
I remember   resting
in your lap   vaguely
aware   of pulsing
between us
in conversation   how to say
I have this tree
on a horseshoe ridge
that is the first ocean
to swim
in the evening wind
how to say: years after your death
one early summer
from the pink and white
petals of its hair
something
was unfolding   just what
that pulsing was
and isn't
I shook those rough dark limbs
distracting it
with the petals
like snow
like hair
in sun

DANIEL HALPERN

FAMILY LIKENESS

This is not my father's room.
He has not been here in his silence,
and I have not asked him.
Nor was I ever his guest.

In one corner of this room the light
is on the table where dill grows in a box.
I use it for salad, or eggs, or veal
in its pale sauce. The salad is of red

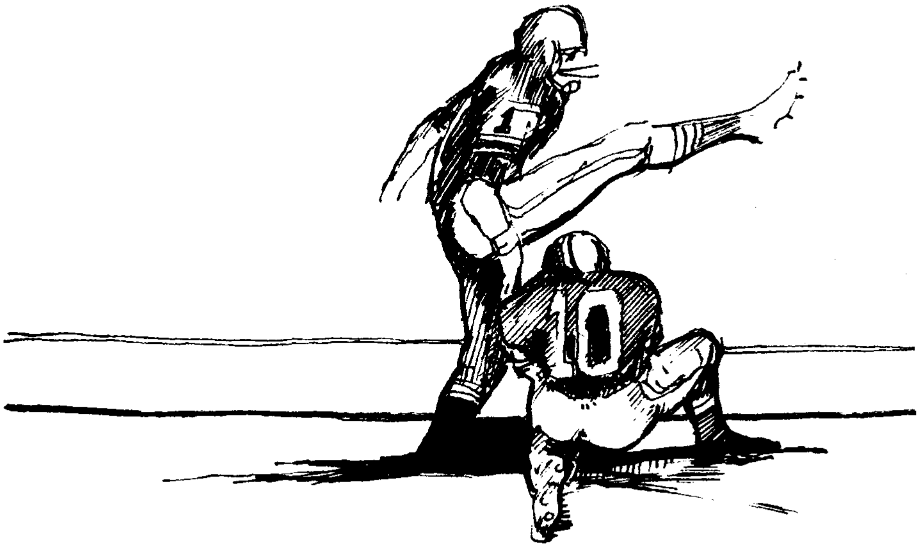
lettuce; but it is not for the food
that I discuss the room. There is a mirror
I stand in front of and speak to myself
as I speak now, after years, to others.

I take off my clothes and place my hands
on the layers of fat that have collected.
This is how the food becomes part of the room,
and why my father is for the moment with me here.

As I stand before the mirror it is the fat
that calls back to him this last time:
not as guest or friend or likeness,
but as one too thin from giving up so little.

A Story by Gerald Taaffe

Kicking



Bonnie wants me to tell the whole story about Scottford, so that maybe people will come to believe that the town at least exists.

I tell her that no one will believe it. Why don't I send a picture of her to the wire services instead?

"Be serious," she says.

"I am," I reply. "I could send one of Tracy instead. Or of any of your sisters for that matter. You're all lovely girls, better than the Australians any day."

She doesn't like that and lets me know it. She leans back, kicking the football up and down on the end of a shapely foot. It's a perfect spiral every time. There's something about the rhythm of the kicking that tells me how she feels.

If she wanted to she could disembowel me with a quick kick. They're kicking fools in Scottford. They're the best kickers in the world. Punt, place kick, even the old drop kick. Those skills are what Scottford is all about.

Just about every kicker in professional football is from this Ontario village of no more than 950 souls. Bonnie was about to leave for a tryout with the Kansas City Chiefs when I entered her life.

Of course, the tryout wasn't going to be under her real name. She would have gone to the Chiefs as Réal Popovici, a Franco-Rumanian soccer-style specialist.

The kicker who said, "I keeck a touchdown" was actually a Scottford girl. Her real name is Dodie, and she's one of Bonnie's best friends. When Alex Karras quoted her, she knew she was overdoing the accent. She teaches "Foreign Accents" now in the village school, and uses this incident as a caution to young Scottfordites being trained to take their place in the pros.

It's the social problems that have to be taught. You don't have to teach kicking in Scottford any more than you do eating or sleeping.

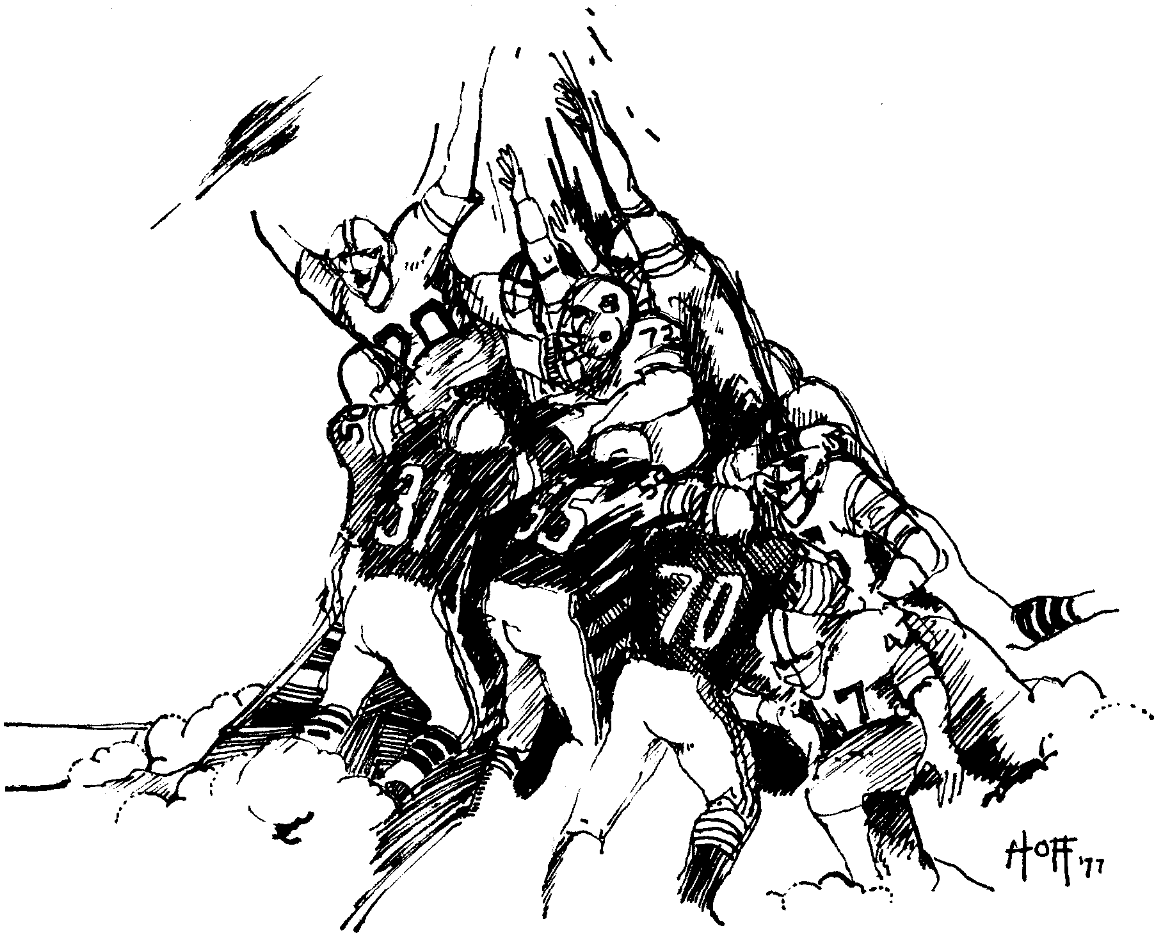
It's a lonely business going off to the big football towns. Everyone says that the kicking specialist is a loner, which is true enough, but for athletes from Scottford it can be like a sentence to solitary confinement. It's hard enough for the men. They can't drop their assumed personalities for a moment. Rather than take any risks of being revealed for what they are, they pretty well stay by themselves. Their real life is there in the stadiums before the cheering thousands, and in the long tearful letters they send home.

For the girls, though, it's Hell. Far more of the town's women than men are in the pro leagues. Without exception they're big, warm, loving girls, and back home in the off-season any one of them can talk a foot and ankle off you. All this has to be completely squelched during the season.

The locker room is the worst. The girls have a hundred and one ways of avoiding detection in the locker room. Telling about the close calls they've had, Dodie or any of the girls can make you double over with laughter. But there's something basically pathetic about these stories. The girls go mad with frustration in the locker rooms. The way Dodie talks about a playful running back in Denver can make even me feel how miserable and tantalizing that part of their careers must be.

The villagers have tried many times to get rid of the secrecy clause in the contracts. I was in on the discussion this year. We met a committee of top officials in each of the pro leagues. They're the only outsiders in the know. Not even the coaches know who their best kickers really are. Our argument is that football fans are ready to accept the predominance of women and Scottford in this one aspect of the game. We feel that it would add a little human interest and, we're not ashamed to say it, sex appeal.

GERALD TAAFFE is an Ottawa free-lance writer whose work has appeared in the NAR once before.



The big football people just groan. They talk about more money, about long-term and no-cut contracts, about fringe benefits. They even threaten to de-emphasize kicking, which sounds to Scottford people like a threat to ban breathing.

The rule changes the leagues have enacted so far, though, have made pro football more dependent on the town. We produce the best kickers in the world. When the NFL, for example, ruled that kickoffs would be from further back, Bonnie said, "Big deal." Our kickers hold themselves back a little on the field. They can kick further than they do. To really accommodate them, the kicking side of the game would have to be of more heroic proportions.

But the secrecy clause is still there, and the question remains why people from Scottford let themselves in for months of solitude and frustration every year. They won't tell you. Every one of them pulls a long face when you ask the question. Almost all of their salaries go back home, a lot in local taxes, and they talk about helping build up the town, or even about something specific like the new water filtration plant. But you'd be crazy to believe them. They could no more give up trying for the top in their field than they could swear off food. They *have* to do it, and the real martyrs in the town are people who have to stay behind for one reason or another.

Probably the best way to explain the town is to tell how I came to settle down here. These days, I'm getting like everyone else in Scottford. I have a football in my possession at most times. When I don't, I'm juggling something at the end of my foot. I'm editor of the *Scottford Kickoff,* and at the paper we pass copy around by foot, and in a hundred other ways express our feelings to each other through kicking or simulated kicking. When I leave town, the surroundings seem silent and somehow unsettling. I have to think before I realize that what I miss is the constant background noise of Scottford—the muted percussion of foot on leather, as natural to your ears after a while as the lapping of waves on the Georgian Bay shoreline.

It was chance that brought me here, although when I look back on it I see that I was looking for some kind of happy accident. It was early May. I had turned 30 a few days before. I had my fishing gear with me, a few changes of clothes, and close to $5,000 in traveller's cheques, which was all that was left after I'd sold my car, closed down the family business and arranged a divorce settlement with my wife.

My idea was to go on an extended fishing trip. I would start with the Spring rainbow runs in the Georgian Bay area and move west. The money would last until I reached British Columbia and the tail end of the coho salmon run. Then I would look for a job on Vancouver Island, where you can go fishing every day of the year if you like.

I was a real fishing nut in those days. Most of the time I was working too hard to do much about it. When I was able to take time off for a fishing trip, I'd really go beserk. I'd lose 10 or 15 pounds in a few days. I'd forget to eat or drink. I'd be up before dawn and not back until dark, and then only because I'd be having hallucinations or other funny symptoms that made it just about impossible to keep on going. On these few fishing trips the normal rules of human survival—to avoid pain and discomfort—would be suspended. I could get some people to go away fishing with me once—even my ex-wife went along once, before we were married—but no one ever accepted a second invitation.

The first thing I saw of Scottford was the brightly floodlit water-tower. The bus had taken a detour. Until then I didn't even know there was such a town as Scottford, so the tower really made me sit up and stare. It's perched up high over a steep claybank. At its base are two cut-out figures of football players at least as high as five story buildings. One is in the classic punting pose, and the other looks like he's just let go a soccer-style kickoff. The tank is in the shape of a football, with the inscription: "Scottford, Kicking Capital of the World."

When the bus entered town I could see that Main Street was all lit up with decorations and jammed with traffic. We fell in at the tail end of a parade, and immediately the driver took to honking. Halfway over a bridge we came to a complete stop. I looked down at one of the most beautiful trout pools I had ever seen, fast moving in the center and broken up by rocks near the edges into eddies and back currents. I saw one trout jump and then another and another.

There it was, right under my eyes. I bellowed, and then bellowed again. I grabbed my gear and hauled it to the front of the bus. "Let me off!" I shouted at the driver. "Let me off!"

He paid no attention to me. He was leaning out of the window, arguing with someone. "I'll stop honking," he was shouting. "Sure I'll stop honking." He put his hand down on the horn and let go a blast. "I'll stop when the perverts in this town let my bus pass through."

He was talking to a big fresh-faced girl wearing what looked like a police uniform. She said, in a menacing-weary voice, "You *want* to go to jail, don't you." She walked away. There was no doubt about it. She was a cop.

"OPEN THE DOOR!" I shouted. "OPEN IT!"

The driver turned to me. "You're going to stay on this bus until we get to Owen Sound, and no more noise from you."

"Let him get off." The cop had returned. The driver looked at her and then at me. He opened the door, which was a good thing for both of us, because I was about to hit him.

"Officer," I called out to the girl. "Is there a hotel or something like that in town?" My first instinct, of course, was to bring all my bulky gear with me down to the river, but I had a supply of frozen bait to think about.

"Wait here," she said. "I'll see who's got a room." Her voice was much sweeter, even seductive, now that the bus had moved on. I remember thinking in a vague way that she was really a very lovely girl. She went into a tobacco and variety shop and made a phone call. When she came out, she said, "I'll take you there." She had a football in her hand. She dropped it, as in a punt, but more playfully. I didn't see her foot move, but she must have kicked it, because I heard the percussion and saw the ball sail high over the lights and out of sight. She stopped it a few moments later with a little back flip of her foot. It went up in the air a few feet and landed back in her hands.

There were footballs in the air everywhere, and a constant percussion of foot on leather. The parade was a block ahead of us, and I could see footballs flying in the air between the floats. A group of three fine-looking girls walking ahead of us were talking with animation, all the while playing complex little games with a football, as though to punctuate and give force to their words. I realized now that when the police officer made her call she had taken the receiver off the hook with her foot, tucking it neatly between head and shoulder, all the while handling a football.

This wasn't as strange as it probably sounds. Mind you, it did seem a little odd, but by the time we got to the place I was to stay I had become used to the byplay with footballs. If I hadn't had so much stuff to carry I would have reached out for the ball myself.

From what Bonnie tells me, I made quite a sensation that first night by being so easygoing about the ways of the town. Most strangers go a little crazy. They get out quick, or act obnoxious in one way or another. Even the league officials, who know what to expect, act a little strange.

It was different with me. My fishing mania was part of it. It would have taken something truly astonishing to get my mind off fishing that night. But there's also the fact that I've always loved football. I had a few stupid injuries in high school and university both, or I would have been better known. Even so, I was in the Tigercats training camp when my father had his first attack and I was called back to take over the family business. I always loved the feel and smell of a football, and if the Ticats had let me try for running back instead of linebacker I think I would have hung in there for a while. At any rate, the experience took away some of the strangeness of Scottford. The town always sounds like a football training camp.

I was really surprised at the room the cop found for me. It was in a big old house that had been transformed into a guest lodge. The lobby was small, but very luxurious. The desk clerk was what you'd expect to find in a top big city hotel. He was a big man, almost as big as I am, but he somehow looked willowy. I had to look close before I saw the fine lines on his face and loose skin around his neck. Even so, he seemed sort of like a boy. Apart from the few signs of age, his skin was smooth and glowing. The cop called him Alfred.

I hardly recognized the cop the next time I saw her. I had been down at the river for a few hours and had two really good trout, one of them at least ten pounds. She came with two other girls, and crazed as I was with the fishing I had to stare at them for a few moments. They wore plain white tee shirts and basketball shorts. "You're the cop?" I shouted at her. They laughed, three fine girls, all laughs and smiles. What a great place!

I'm sorry now that I didn't drop down my rod and enjoy the first sight of those girls more. What I saw was enough to make me tingle with pleasure, but I was watching my line carefully as the spawn bag ticked along the bottom. A little tug and, if you don't react right away, or if you have too much slack, the fish is gone. The cop's name was Tracy. She was with her sisters, dark-haired Shelley and blonde Bonnie. Yes, I met my darling Bonnie that very night, close to the stroke of midnight, and since then nothing has been the same. The girls had a big thermos of coffee with them. They handed a cup of it to me. They squealed with pleasure when, a few minutes later, I brought a nice, silver-sided four-pounder to net.

We really had a good time that night. Naturally the girls had a football with them, and played kicking games on and off. Once Tracy let go a kick that passed within two inches of my ear, which made everyone laugh but Bonnie.

"That's too close," said Bonnie.

"It's okay," I said. "I've never seen kickers like you girls."

Said Bonnie, "She's not as good as she thinks." She put her arm around my shoulder. I looked at her, and what I saw in her eyes made my pulse beat a lot faster. Tracy and Shelley were a little distance away, squealing and playing. I told Bonnie about my own football days, and had just reached the part about the Ticats training camp when I hooked into another fish.

Later, the girls made a little campfire. Tracy brought me a steak and a glass of Gatorade. She had cut up the meat so that I could eat without having to stop fishing. She said, "Bonnie was right. I shouldn't have put that ball so close to your head."

"I might have sneezed," I said, which made them all laugh. The two sisters embraced and the incident was closed. Later, Tracy and Shelly left. Bonnie and I were alone when I caught the next trout. She curled up on a big rock by the shoreline and slept while I fished without luck for another hour and a half. I began to hook into snags. Twice I found myself literally *falling* asleep, that is, beginning to crumple. I began to see double. I decided it was time to stop.

"You're quitting now?" called out Bonnie. I jumped. I had forgotten about her. While I took down my gear, she took a knife from my bag and began to clean the fish. She did it quickly and efficiently. She found an empty jar to store the roe. We were ready to leave in less than five minutes.

We went down the empty mainstreet together. A feeling of well-being descended on me. I wondered why I had felt so tired down by the stream. Bonnie came with me into the lodging house. "Let's not bother Alfred," she said. She put the fish away in the freezer, while I changed out of my fishing clothes. I came back in the lobby to find her gently dandling a football at the end of her foot, a gesture which somehow stirred up my wildest hopes. "Do you want to kick the ball around a little?" she asked. We went across the road to a practice field by the bayshore. It was getting light. There was a gentle lapping of waves on the shore. In the distance I could hear the faint percussion of a foot on leather. The town, hidden from us by a grove of trees, was waking up.

I found that I was kicking pretty well. Nothing great, but I got off a few fifty-yard punts, and got one field goal over the uprights from 30 yards out. I was no match for Bonnie, but considering that it was my first night in town she said that I was really doing well. I offered to show her some line-work, which was okay with her. We went over to a tackling dummy. I took the offensive role first. The idea was for her, as a defensive tackle, to get past me to the dummy. It didn't take much explaining. She moved to a perfect four-point stance. I called out the signal, and found myself flat on my back. I could hear the "slap" as she hit the dummy with a truly vicious block-tackle. What a girl!

It wasn't that easy for her after that, but she was quick and tough and got at the dummy almost one time in three. Scottford girls don't like to admit it, but they love the body contact of the game. They'd never make it as linemen in the pros. They just don't have the bulk. But let me tell you they make their share of tackles on kick returns. If there's a bad snap from center, they can run, block or pass. Dodie once went over for a touchdown from the San Diego 18 yard line.

That fine, clear morning, though, there were no coaches or spectators to worry about. After a while we began to fool around. We switched roles. I imitated the gorilla type of tackle, swinging my arms around. She grabbed me. "That's holding," I said, "tweet, tweet, tweet." We went down together, laughing like crazy. Holding her down on the wet turf I thought for a moment that I must be hallucinating. But sweet, soft, squirmy Bonnie was no hallucination. One thing led to another. We made love on that field until the sun rose and shone directly in our eyes.

Alfred had hot coffee ready for us when we returned to the lodge. I had a glimpse of him breaking eggs in the kitchen with deft little strokes of his foot. He soon served up a real training camp kind of breakfast. I must have put away a pound of pork sausage and half a dozen eggs. I was beginning to nod off at the table. Bright-colored dreams were already playing around in my head when Bonnie said she had to make a phone call. She looked worried. "Anything wrong?" I asked, but she was off. I fell asleep right there at the table. I have a nice memory of Bonnie and Albert sort of leading me to my room. When I got up again it was six. Bonnie was waiting for me in the lobby, very cheerful. While I was sleeping she had arranged for her sister Shelley to take her place as Réal Popovici at Kansas City.

Going down to the river with Bonnie that evening it seemed as though everyone in town knew that we were lovers. That didn't stop the other girls we ran into from giving me bold sexy stares that would have stopped me in my tracks if it hadn't been for Bonnie. Even Bonnie complains about the roving eyes of the girls in town, although I must say in all honesty that she can be as bad as any of them. Naturally she holds back her steamy glances for out-of-towners, or "football husbands" as we call most men who have settled down here with Scottford girls. Locally born men stir something else in her.

It didn't take long for me to see that most of the men in town were like blood brothers to Alfred. I stopped off at the variety store to buy cigars. The guy behind the counter actually giggled when I gave the brand name. He was smooth skinned as a baby. His voice was high-pitched. He was big and muscular, but that's not what you thought of at all when you looked at him. Some 10 or 12 year old boys on the street were more of the same, and the waiters at a restaurant where we ate supper were as pretty and skittish as girls.

Still, I was feeling pretty good, and it was only when Bonnie and I were down by the riverside, rigging up my fishing rod, that I said anything about the town's men. It wasn't much. I think I asked where all the fairies came from. I wasn't ready for Bonnie's reaction.

She glared at me. For a moment I was afraid that she was going to snap my $150 custom-crafted spinning rod in two. She said, "I don't ever want to hear you say anything like that again." She wasn't shouting, but she might as well have been. She gave her football a vicious kick, rebounding it back off the wall of the textile mill across the river. "Those boys are all great kickers. Some of them are better than I am, a lot better. If it weren't for their sacrifice we couldn't be the town we are. We *love* our Scottford men. I won't listen to anything against them."

"Who's saying anything against them?"

"You are," she said. "Outsiders don't understand what fine people they are. They're not perverts or anything like that."

The story came out.

There's a price to be paid for all the kicking in Scottford. It must be the early start. Babies start kicking before they can walk. You can even see it when they're dozing off in their carriages. There's the usual little pink thumb in the mouth, but also a thumping up of the covers. The little devils don't rock, they kick themselves to sleep. For the males it means an inevitable wear and tear in what Bonnie called the "reproductive regions." Every one of them castrates himself. There's no use sending them away during the most vulnerable years. By the time they're six months old, the kicking habit is as natural to them as bawling or belching up milk.

Somehow Bonnie got me to stop fishing before sundown. We went to the *Kik-ee-Klatch*, which is the only place in town where you can buy a drink. It's supposed to be a private club for female ex-pros, but in practice anyone of age can go there except locally-born men.

"We keep them out for their own good," Bonnie explained. "They wouldn't know what to make out of a place like this with all the drinking and bad language."

As the evening went on I saw more clearly how the women really felt about those men. Tracy and Dodie had joined us at the table. We were all getting a little high. The girls started to make jokes about "unks," by which they meant locally born men. For instance, it was the one "unk" on the Town Council who had led the way to the banning of DDT and other insecticides. What made the girls laugh was that the town switched to the kind of insect control that makes the male bugs sterile.

The girls claimed that the word "unk" came from "uncle." I said it must come from "eunuch." They got sentimental about how much they loved the unks. They boasted about the refinement of these men, their gentleness, their great skills as cooks and gardeners, their cultural flair. I didn't feel right about it then, and still don't, but I dropped the subject once and for all. What they're right about is that the unks are a handsome, graceful bunch, always laughing and helpful. Without them it wouldn't be the town it is, and I love the town.

It wasn't until November that I found out what I should have known all along about Scottford women. Bonnie and I were to be married in a few weeks. There seemed to be no reason at all for me to worry about the "little bridal shower" at Dodie's house. It was early afternoon when she left, looking very feminine and old fashioned in her high heels and flowered dress. By six I was a little uneasy, and by ten I was really worried. I went out in the lobby to phone Dodie's house. There was no answer. I tried it again and let it ring for a long time.

When I hung up, Alfred was standing there with two martinis on a tray. He was a good friend by them. He was helping us in a lot of ways with the house we were supposed to move into. I think he knew Bonnie and me better than we knew ourselves. I still felt like shouting at him. I felt like kicking the tray out of his hands. Instead, I put down the two martinis in quick order.

"Another one?" asked Alfred. I shook my head, not looking at him. "Where are they?" I asked. "Wasn't it just tea, gossip and presents?"

"It usually starts out that way," said Alfred. He hesitated.

"I want to know everything!" I was shouting.

"You could try to find them," he said. "Take my car if you want." He said that after "bridal showers" the girls usually headed off in the general direction of Wasaga Beach. That was where I eventually found them.

You could see the campfire from a mile off. At first I thought it might be fishermen, but as I came closer I heard a loud blaring of music and the kicking sounds that were a dead giveaway. There they were, kicking and dancing away, having a great time. There were men with them. I stopped the car and jumped out. As always, there was a football in my hand. I squeezed it until it began to give.

I gave that ball a kick like I've never kicked before or since. Up, up and away it went. It must have traveled two hundred yards. I knew at the moment of impact where the ball was going to go. I waited while it hung in the air, far out of sight, and then landed in the campfire. A great shower of sparks and firebrands went up. The ball exploded.

I could feel that kick in my innermost being. I felt the satisfaction of it even as I bellowed her name, and as a blonde figure detached herself from the group and raced gracefully over the sand towards me.

I just couldn't really be mad. She threw her arms around my neck. She wanted me to go back with her to the bonfire. "You're coming with me," I said. I tried to bawl her out as we drove back to town. But as soon as she saw I was mad she started crying. I knew that she really had a snootful of liquor. The car smelled like the *Kik-ee-Klatch* on Sunday morning. I shouldn't have let her crying affect me. I know what drunken remorse is worth.

She told me she couldn't help it. It was the other girls who wanted to go on the junket. It wouldn't happen again. She said how hard it was for her. I should know that it's harder for Scottford girls to hold themselves back. "We get so horny," she said, really wailing now. "It's the bad part of the kicking."

We hadn't reached Collingwood before I was consoling her. We pulled the car over to an empty stretch of beach and made up. I couldn't help thinking about that great kick I had made and what a wonderful thing it was to kick a football. Bonnie said, quite rightly, that it would be a legend around the town. By the time we reached the lodge I had agreed to let her go to a pro training camp the following spring.

In other words, I became a typical Scottford husband. You learn that your loving wife has a wild streak in her that you can keep in check but never really tame. Like a good "football husband," I also have to look ahead to a period of up to 10 years when I'll be separated from the woman I love from early summer to winter.

When I daydream now it's about the day when the pro teams drop the secrecy clauses. I'd be free then to trail along after my wife during the season. To an outsider it may not sound like much, but right now it's all I want from life. I want to have the supreme thrill of hearing the crowds calling out my darling's name—"BONNIE! BONNIE! BONNIE!"—and then having her all to myself when she comes out of the locker-room all fresh and glowing.

I have to confess that I've also thought of the tv angle. The camera would be bound to zoom in on the solitary man among the players' spouses. There might be some dumb jokes, but there would also be a hell of a lot of jealous bastards from coast-to-coast when they saw the husband of that magnificent girl.

There's also a nightmare side to the daydreams. It's not reasonable, but since that bridal shower junket I often get unreasonable. What if all this stuff about the frustrations of playing in the pros is a whitewash? What if the girls have their own ways of getting men into their beds? I don't mean to say that they would take any chance at all of blowing their cover. They're too pro for that. But what if they've devised some cunning way of ensuring absolute secrecy? I'll probably worry myself awake during our long Canadian nights while Bonnie is away with the pros.

That isn't to say that I'd change places with any man. I speak for all Scottford husbands when I say that the pride and love our women stir up in us far outweigh our selfish worries. ☐

A STORY BY EUGENE GARBER

THE GAMBLERS

His first wagering was in Plaquemines Parish, where excommunications later rained upon racists like a plague of locusts, but no sanction ever touched the casinos. Just as his father had foretold, the doorman furnished him a sport jacket laden with the odor of cigars, like the coats of his grandfather. So he entered there an avatar of the great bearded one, most famous gambler of the crescent city. Above the low hum of voices he heard the slap of cards, the metallic titillation of the roulette ball, and the scamper of warm dice over green felt. He twitched his nose in the smoke. He had arrived. But how could he have guessed then that the drink girl in the black net stockings was a mistress of the inner sanctum?

He knew there was a great secret at the heart of it. In his room over the grocery old man Tisdale told him how he had stood under the night lights at Narragansett one July beside a man who held a twin double ticket worth twenty-four thousand dollars, whose fourth horse came second but an inquiry moved it up. And the man went down on his knees, said Mr. Tisdale. And though he was young his eyes mattered and his fingers curled and withered, and when he got home no doubt his wife did not recognize him because he was twenty years grayer, like Rip Van Winkle. Mere money could not cause such a thing. And he, the boy, saw in the old man's own eyes such a brightness that he thought maybe the tote board with the pulsing red "Inquiry" had unmanned him at the same time.

Later, inheriting something of his father's belief in science, he studied combinations and permutations, read the great cryptographer's inquiry into poker and the physicist's report of the man who repaired watches with brain waves. He read about the mathematics professor who had won twenty thousand at roulette in Las Vegas. But the system of hedging was so complicated that when the croupier shrewdly increased the tempo of the betting, the professor said he was seized with something like a brain fever which did not leave him for a year, by which time his wife, whose name was Loma, had gone away in despair.

Nerve, his grandfather had said, whom he had once been allowed to watch at poker. The old man wore a straw hat, a white shirt, black sleeve garters above the elbow, and a black bow tie. From his left forearm hung a cane like a stunted third leg, which he needed when he rose, because he had suffered a stroke. And over his left eye was a thick lens which effected an horrendous cyclopean beaming. "Yet, gentlemen, I assure you that it can scarcely penetrate this smoky ozone, much less the paper of your holdings." Each hand revealed with a little poetry. "Here in this scribble of low black forest two heart's-blood red knaves. Do they excel, gentlemen?" The old man spread his cards upon the felt with a quick crooking of his middle finger which, along with the subtle obscenity of his words, set the table to laughing.

"The goddess Mnemosyne sits at my feet," said the father, the black-jack man, the bridge man who mentally constructed models of the concealed hands at the beginning of play and revised them as the cards fell. "Remember, son, there is no Fortuna. And Mnemosyne does not favor an impetuous suitor." So his father played modestly, according to his needs, earning at black-jack, gin, and bridge perhaps a thousand a month in the forties and fifteen hundred in the fifties. "But don't you, my son, ever think of being a professional gambler, because it is slow work for the patient and the nerveless, and you are a romantic, son, a thruster and a diver in."

That first time in the Old Post House in Plaquemines Parish he constructed himself an image, Manichaean, which he hoped might lead toward the *sanctum sanctorum*, because even then at the age of 16 he did not accept nerve or science, sensing that at heart every true gambler is an heretical metaphysician, that father and grandfather tricked their dualistic cosmologies out in jejune metaphors as older girls will sometimes wear spring pinafores. That was, in fact, half of the double image—the black woman who served the sandwiches wore a white pinafore. The other half was the black net stockings which the drink girl wore over the creamy flesh of her legs. But they seemed to him mere servants. How could he have guessed they were themselves part of the mystery?

On the greensward of the felt table his grandfather had made a high stack of red chips rise up out of a scattering of white and blue, like the minaret amid moorish ruins he would later see in Spain yielding to the wind's patient embrace and the grass's slow advance. So, in his mind's eye the chips were emblems of epochs, rising and falling, swept away by the blank hand of time. Behind them sat his grandfather, cyclopean god of Chance, white beard ambered by the eons of smoke rising

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from the cigar that hung from the corner of his mouth, the cigar virtually motionless, tipped by a long delicately curved white ash like, perhaps, a wand of incense in a temple of the East.

At Jesuit High School, the only Protestant in his class, he had a special relationship with Mr. Donough, the tall scholastic, idol of his classmates, from whose black cassock appeared two beautiful bone-white hands, and a head of hair so red that he might have been splashed with his savior's blood. At the class picnic in May, when Mr. Donough traded black cassock for white gym trunks, all the boys tried to duck him in the lake, drown idol like frenzied devotees of Krishna. But could not. For he stood erect, all heart-wood, would bend but not buckle. When they tried to push his head under water, he snapped up like a sapling, and when at last he was tired of playing with them, he flicked them off like flies. "Away Beelzebubs!" he thundered. Later he asked Mr. Donough, "What is the theological objection to gambling?"

When confronted by the proposal, his father had said, "I'm going to surprise you, son. I'm not going to oppose for one minute your going to school with the Jesuits. In fact, I want you to study your Aquinas hard, because he was a hell of a system man and will act as an effective antidote against your propensity to dream. And it doesn't matter that he threw it all up at the end, because that is a death's door trick of every saint, a little something to spice up the canonization inquiry, a fillip for the Devil's Advocate, a clever little bump at the top of the stretch, as Mr. Tisdale would say." So there was no fight, and he had geared himself for a fight, so he said, "Is it true that all great gamblers and saints are celibates?"

Mr. Tisdale's horse stories were legion; therefore it was not out of pity for the old man that he climbed the malodorous stairs behind the grocery. It was part of his quest. There was, for instance, the story of the ghost horse, the ringer, a gray gelding moved surreptitiously from track to track and substituted for longshots—a ruse more daring than dope or bugs. Mr. Tisdale himself had once been at Hialeah with the ghost horse and won a pile. And right here in New Orleans at the Fairgrounds was where the ghost horse's career ended, bit in his teeth, twenty lengths in the fore, breaking the track record for the mile in a $1,500 claiming race. The jockey was cashiered, but the trainer and the owner disappeared. Where was the gray gelding now? Named, legitimized? Miraculously resexed and now siring a line of lightning foals? Mr. Tisdale did not know.

He was a scholarly one and did not easily abandon hope of finding significance in books. At times he turned even to fiction. There was, of course, the great story of the obsessive gambler driven to rhythmic release of guilt through hideous loss. There was the very strange story of the great gray horse that might have ridden straight out of Mr. Tisdale's dreams. This horse was essentially a huge penis, which accorded better with his observations and intuitions than the anal theories. But the only story that really seized his imagination was the one of the young man driven from snow to hot card dens, from towering hope to despair, confronted at last by the Queen of Spades.

So that night at the Old Post House while his father played blackjack he played at the silver-dollar dice table, betting a system that his father had taught him, hedging *Field* and *Don't Come*. He won forty-two dollars and would have won more if he hadn't occasionally made a wild bet on snake-eyes or ten-the-hard-way just to break the monotony of the system. Yet it was a good thing the system was simple, because his eye was often on the drink girl, who later that night in his masturbatory imaginings lay writhing beneath him, black stockings and black bush a tacky web against her moonlit silver flesh.

He and Mr. Donough stood by the box hedge at the end of the school ground. "Well, my Protestant friend, the Roman soldiers diced for Christ's garments. That image alone would be conclusive for some. If not, the Church finds the same fault as with usury—earnings without base of labor. But if it be argued, as you do, that the gambler works hard, sustains risk, then the Church points to side effects—concupiscence, lust, *et cetera*. But if it be argued, as you do, that the gambler is a paragon of sobriety, then consider. The Devil works in two ways—possession and dispossession. Gambling falls in the second class. It substitutes for this rich round world of ours another of utter non-significance, rife with empty ciphers, and bogus royalty, bodiless red and black queens displaying geometrical flowers."

His mother died soon after he was born, just as his father's had. But his grandfather took a second wife much younger than he, an elegant silver-haired lady who kept a candle-lit table served by a black woman in a white pinafore. No cards were played in that house, no whiskey or cigars appeared outside his grandfather's study. He and his father were dinner guests there on rare occasion. Always after the meal the black woman brought them brass finger bowls of icy water with thin lemon slices floating on the surface. His grandfather and his father dipped and cleaned card-sullied fingers while his step-grandmother in a high-collared black dress presided like a priestess over their ablutions. He dipped his fingers, too, but had no hope of cleaning them, fouled in the secret nights.

"You asked if it is true that all great saints and gamblers are celibates," his father said smiling. "Actually, son, nothing is true that begins with the word *all* unless it's that all fatherly advice is given to be ignored. Distrust all syllogisms. However, if you want the testimony of a minor gambler, I would say that the statement is certainly *generally* true." "Why?" he asked, smiling in his turn. "Because, son, the three ladies refuse to consort. Each demands all: Mnemosyne (the unenlightened, but not we, would say Fortuna), Aphrodite, and Theologia the handmaiden of Faith." "What about grandfather? Doesn't he serve both Mnemosyne and Aphrodite?" "A sly old philanderer all right, but pays for it with a forked life. Mnemosyne keep you, son, in mind of these answers."

So, in his senior year he wrote his own dialogue called "An Inquiry into Games of Chance." Socrates and the young man reclined in the shade of a high hedge. In front of them glowed the lake in the midday sun. "Why can not a man settle fortune and life with a quick stroke of luck?" The chaste old satyr answered slyly with a metaphor of lake, blind when gold, clairvoyant when blue. "And Fortuna, struck on a drachma, closes dead men's eyes." By these and other exempla the young man was taught to avoid luck's fleering seductions. But a little later, he slipped tunic and Socrates robe. Together they plunged to the bottom of the lake where beautiful dark fronds caressed their thighs and unravelled the morning's stern dialectic.

The last story that Mr. Tisdale told him was of a steeplechase. (Yes, in his golden days he had been to England and once even to Rio, where he cashed three consecutive quinellas, eating steak on the terrace among beautiful ladies under

parasols, watching the horses pass before the soft arch of Sugarloaf Mountain.) At the final jump his horse lost jockey and he a thousand pounds sterling. "Boy," he said, "for the love of God, never bet steeplechases because the hedges and ditches will trip you every time. And preferably, too, never bet the turf. Your bare dirt track is your only firm footing." There on the arm of his chair Mr. Tisdale's fingers ramped feebly like an old pastured gray imagining itself answering the call to the post. So he deserted Mr. Tisdale on the grounds that his horses of Chance had never been truly cosmic but were merely sexual totems, impotent at that.

A last time by the box hedge Mr. Donough gave him valedictory words. "I say nothing, my Protestant friend, about the theological irregularities of your brilliantly written inquiry, for you do not fall under our orthodoxy." "Thank you for the left-hand compliment." Mr. Donough laughed, then sobered. "If I were the sybil I would prophesy, saying, 'Protestant, you will suffer fierce contention between the Devil and the Flesh on the one hand and God and the Spirit on the other. But you will fall at last among the sheep.' " Then, without benefit of the occulting grill, he confessed. "I have sinned sexually." To which the scholastic replied, "I have no power to shrive you. But hear this. When the issue seems most dark and dubious, remember all that you can of love." Mr. Donough laid his hand briefly on his shoulder and then, because it was early June and the grass already high, plucked up his cassock over his shoes and led him back.

II.

He meant to choose Aphrodite. At any rate, he slid the golden band onto the third finger sinister, kissed sweet lips, and with the small legacy his grandfather had left him took her to Europe. And her family did not object that he was the son and grandson of gamblers or that he took his bride honeymooning before he was certain of a job. For he had graduated first in his class at the university and it was 1961. He could have his pick of dozens of positions, all with trajectories as high as rainbows, ending in treasure troves. But the bride's old grandmother, who had come to them from Lyon ten years before, would not remove her widow's weeds for the wedding. "Break my mourning for marriage wiz a Protestant?"

In Monte Carlo the second night she said, "What are you going to play?" "Nothing." They stood outside the velvet rope that cordoned off the Chemin de Fer table. He did not need to understand the game. The noble man with the gray hair had captured the cards and held them against six other players whom he eyed disdainfully through a monocle. Gold cuff links flashed at the edge of the sleeves of his black coat. The hands of his paramour, she also in black but sequined and scintillant, made a white band on his upper arm. The croupier with polished paddle served him from a little tower of cards, dropped the defunct holdings of his foes into a shadowy slit in the green felt.

"You're hurting me," she said. "I have to, because you aren't broken yet." A little later he told her to stop crying. "Everything good is marked by blood—birth, marriage, redemption." "Phooey. Don't feel required to parade your Phi Beta Kappa valedictorian wisdom around for me." But later, in the black of night, with the sea below almost as quiet as a lake, she said, "I'm afraid." "Why?" "Because you aren't always with me. Where do you go?" When he didn't answer, she said, "My grandmother told me you would come and go." "I was only thinking that I had never seen those big square gold and black chips stacked around a greensward with a tower in the middle, like a kind of Stonehenge."

At Lido he encountered the square black chip again. The rule was that each entrant must buy one for five thousand lire. It was also a rule that the black chip could not be changed or redeemed. She didn't quite understand. "Why don't they just charge admission?" "This is better, because although you have to lose the chip, you could make a million with it first." She lost hers the first bet at the roulette table, black on black. He won twice on red, then lost. He watched the wheel for a while and then bet singles in the 00-6 quadrant, for his father had said, "Your only chance at roulette is to find a hinkey in the wheel balance." He won a hundred thousand lire. "You're some player. Can I come to your hotel?"

That night, for the first time, she allowed him a slant light from the bathroom, and the dark net of her sex was more labyrinthine than touch had led him to hope. Yet the second time he failed. Because suddenly the passionate eye that looked up at him was a spinning wheel and the curious single fleck against the sheen of the cornea was the clicking ball. Dizzy, he shut his eyes. She laughed without spite. "I forgot to count. Mama said it would come about the tenth night." He shook his head. "It was that black old woman who played opposite me all night. She looked like your grandmother."

That became a series of three. Twice more before they left Venice he won, only much bigger, and twice more he failed, only more abjectly. On the third occasion her laughter faded. "What is it?" No answer. "Where are you now?. . .One time when you were drinking you told me we ought not to marry until you understood something. Does this have to do with that?" "I see now that my grandfather and my father are circle men, converting square cards into coin. But I have been boxing the wheel, converting circles into gold and black squares, a deadly forbidden business. That is the lesson of Lido. But what is the lesson of your black hair?"

"Me? I'm a ghost, a gray gelding racing across the turf toward an imaginary line where in a little tower the official film reels . . . . No, I'm an ersatz Catholic school boy. Father, can God circle the square, square the circle? Or only the Devil? Or one one and the other the other, et cetera?" He was drunk. "Are you here, Mr. Donough? And do you still say they are without significance, the ciphers that piled up all those big square chips for me?" "I'm here." "Let's see. You wouldn't be Mnemosyne would you? Theologia? Faith? Fortuna? No? Aphrodite? No? Why then you are nothing more than my step-grandmother's brazen fingerbowl and a little tart at that. Hey?"

He was very drunk. "Mnemosyne, my dear, remember how old man Tisdale made of his fingers a steeple-chaser and leaped the box hedge and beat all Ireland to the finish line? And the name of his horse was Black Knave, though I would have preferred Red Knave. Get it? Red Knave, box hedge. No?" "I think you ought to remember your circle men." "All right, the groom remembers his saintly grandfather, who is now a denizen of the City of God. But whose can long before his interment, Aphrodite dear, hung loosely on his forearm. All flesh is grass. But, on the other hand, the father warned, beware all *all's*. All syllogisms. Silly gism, we southerners say. Get it, Aphrodite honey?" Suddenly he began to weep. She held him in her arms.

On a gray morning she said, "Let's leave Venice. It's been bad for us." "Yes, let's leave it to sink like a sequined lady in her own corruption. You want to go home?" "You said that with your Lido winnings you would take me on a sea voyage to the Greek isles. Deep blue grots and the white temples of Diana. I remember everything you say. I'm your book. You will read me and know yourself." "I need to understand a lot more than my paltry self. Still, maybe if I could read you Braille." "But just now you can't. So let's redeem those black Lido chips on our sea voyage." He shook his head dubiously. "I'm afraid nothing good can come of that money."

"All right," he said later, "but first we're going to take a train trip down the Spanish coast. We'll get the ship in Málaga." He had profound faith in the train. Hadn't the great southern boy-writer, also a father-ridden and grandfather-ridden seeker, found ultimate significance in the rhythmic turning of wheels, motion so powerful that it regulated earth and moon? And, indeed, when on the second day they saw from the window a Moorish ruin with minaret intact, he took that for his sign. But when he crept into her berth like a joyous thief, he found that the Lido croupier of sable suit and thin mustache had already toppled down the stacked chips with his evil little rake.

From their choice window in the Palacio they watched the Resurrection, the Roman guards in silver tunics thrown back by the bright assault of the angel. And those who had been in black reappeared in white robes to see the stone rolled away as if a huge hand were dicing, but the treasure was gone. All this transpired serially under the marchers' flambeaux and to the incessant drum-beat along Avenida Generalisimo Franco. So he took this for a sign, and when the bugles had retreated beyond the midnight, took his bride in arms. But for him it was still the penitential season. Somewhere on the empty streets below, Mr. Donough's black cassock swept the litter of the revelers.

On the ship, too, he mistook the suspiration of the sea and a vision of dark undulant kelp for a sign. And this time she said, "Don't try any more for a while. Relax. Everything will be all right again." So he went down to the ship's gaming room, where casual players of gin and bridge were arrayed like theatrical supernumeraries on the edge of a bright light that shone down on the poker table, which, like an unbalanced wheel, was dominated by — who else? — a gentleman with a monocle. When he took a seat, a willowy Negress delivered him whiskey from a brass tray. "The gentleman," she said, "welcomes each new player."

While the incense from the monocled gentleman's thin cigar curled up into the dark beyond the hanging light like a honey-thick image of time, he, the erstwhile groom, played cautiously, made careful inquiry into the game. By the second night he was certain that there were no brothers at the table, no watermarks or broken spokes in the big wheel of the comic bicycle the leopard-skinned man rode in some *fin de siècle* circus. So there were only these: three bad players slowly bleeding to death under the gentleman's clever pricks, a puffy little science player who had attached himself parasitically to the shark's lip, and himself, the one-time honeymooner.

Neither was the negress of concern, though she obviously was his prietess, his temple whore, keeping silent watch behind the bar even after all the other tables were bare. Presently a wife rescued one of the bleeding players, and the other two answered, albeit tardily, to their own wisdom, so that there remainded only the unholy trinity of monocle, sucker, and honeymooner. "Gentlemen," said the gentleman when the triumvirate had completed its third session, "my cordial American companions of the main, I think we are on for the voyage, for the tide is slack and the wind variable." "I'm only hanging by a thread, colonel," lied the scientist, all whose predatory benefactors were no doubt denominated colonel.

So that was the way it seemed, the game as immovable as the black idol who tended without witnessing it. The parasite had swum a long equanimous life in the benign constancy of numbers and could not be denied his leavings. The monocle minced and parried, dashed and thrust, but could not find the honeymooner's heart, who told his bride, "Down there is Beelzebub, who can fly backwards and whet his hands like spears and whose eye records everything nine times or more but cannot strip a twenty-two-year-old American upstart and cannot understand why." "Why?" "Because my father told me I was a deep diver, a loon, and could not be predicted." "He was right."

The end came in the form that any objective observer could have predicted, watching the scientist, the parasite, packing jaws and pockets with the spillings of the ever fiercer confrontation. Suddenly he pushed upon the table a great castellated tower-topped wall of chips. The monocle looked at the honeymooner. "Who topples that Ilium, lad? You or I?" "I," said he. "I," said the monocle. But neither was the Greek, towards whose bright isles the ship now made close approach. So the scientist took all, except for a sibilant confidence he wormed into the honeymooner's ear. "Never play a system man, son. The universe is on our side."

"Did Beelzebub leave us enough to get home?" she said. "Barely, but it wasn't Beelzebub. It was Saint Thomas Aquinas that won the day. But, look," he said, "we're wasting the money we spent on this choice cabin." He undogged the hatch, and there it was all right, a big moon brighter than a silver dollar hanging between the twin horns of the lifeboat davits. And because the ship was rolling gently, the circle of white light roved slowly over her thighs. "I feel like I'm on stage." "Just an old fetishist's trick with lights, my dark beauty, my queen of spades." Later, long after the moon was gone, she said, "My God, you certainly are all right. What did it? What did you learn?" □

RICHARD RACKSTRAW

SIX POEMS

On September 16, the NAR is publishing a collection of poems entitled *Learning to Speak*. Its author, Richard Rackstraw, died in 1974, at the age of 37, and during his lifetime only the book's title poem was published. On this and the three following pages we are pleased to offer a further selection of poems from the book.

AT INTERLOCHEN

There was a day! On the beach
we lay, late afternoon, so close
mere breathing moved us to a kiss.
The water made no sound. No wind
stirred. Birds looked down, and
children played alone.

It was a perfection. Except,

one small fish the children caught,
the hook black in his mouth, scales
shining in the sun a polished aftermath.
I could not bear to look at him—
though knew he dreamed, fish-dumb.
He had everything to do with me.

FOR THEODORE ROETHKE

We began in Michigan, small cities,
one my youth's despair. But now
I take another view of my becoming.
Had my papa not strived within his
self consuming self contempt, your
papa waltzed you off to bed where
sleep comes hard,
we never would have made it. So—

I bless my hands in fish, your hands
in flowers, root and gut, the darkness
of our early hours.

DRIFT

for Paul and June Shepard

Roses of pools, the scant
sense of drift in this room
drowned and moved by the
waters of my blood
in the stranger element. This
pool of ocean has its tides.
A six day drift in my own
sources—the water, flowers,
the eyeless bats, the sharks
of devotion. Drift. The
mercury slides in my mouth.
I am freezing out the skinned
dive of this speech (roses of
pools becoming) of tongues of
magic new friends. They are
the lost genii of love recalling
the ancient track of genes be-
coming (roses of pools) men.

"YOUR ABSENCE, AND THE GATHERING LAKE"

for Loree

Your absence, and the gathering lake
you want under a blank moon. It is
dark where I am by the blowing fire.
You have climbed the height of the dune.
The weight you feel I have refused, I know.
The freezing moon drops closer to you still,
the lake moves with your presence there
alone. "O could I lose all father now."
If earth could give back what we did not
choose to take, the sun turn back the knife,
its utter voice, some life had quickened
in your arms, some sweetness suckled calm.
What wind has stirred this sense of it?
What hand now touches my cold hand?

SETTING THE POEM BY HAND

This is a silver bird, not gold,
not the color of earth's sun
but earth's moon. It is the silver
bird of poetry made as light makes
that dead-star move. It is not magic
this creature lives by you. It is
love, near. It is your art.

I know you have set the poem by hand,
shuffling about like a magician,
its sound its color tuned in long bones
until the lines quick as sense break
and shape a whole creature. It says:
I am the poet. I am the speech of
the flying you dream as you die.

THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM

The red-tailed fish barks
my forehead where I am
lapping like a lion the sweet
azure waters of the first
morning I have breathed as
air breathes into and out of
itself, golden. The green snake
slides to itself unadorned
and waking wonders it has seen this
light for the first time. We talk.
You are watching. The tune is minor.

We are not trembling now and we think
in circuitries the mind we know
cannot. It is alternating current
B-flat easy on us and he
does not dream I am sleeping in his
belly, softer than orange flame
licking the tongue and face of the
One God. I am Aaron and lion at once.
The fish blinks away in the mystery
of the shallow river I have crossed.

Turning, I am turning, my coat is more
golden than this morning and you look:
you are the bride of wonder and I lay
myself down. We talk. The tune is minor.
We are not looking at each other.
The river is articulate as church piano
sounds. It is the small stones that halve
its bulk. We have walked them and we know
their simple power. We are not looking
at each other. And we talk the same talk.

You say nothing. I am thinking of
the snake that winds itself up and hovers
fast asleep, not thinking. The light sunders
in him no thought he is dreaming. He dreams
azure frogs leaping in his very eye. Calm
Aaron leaps and dances in his still mind.
They are the rhythm speaking. They are the voice
of the raging and exhausted love of the One God.

Speech, it is not easy.

You say, when the river is low crabs jump five feet.
What was a mystery now is possible, all things lost
in depths we have not feared enough are possible.
I am Aaron and the lion turning shallow stones.

The river is articulate with sound.
Columns of water rise and the blue
heron does not strike. She rests
hungry and appeased. Indolent,
the lion takes his kids for a walk.
His wife is furious and pleased.
She thinks his thought. Love does
what God wills. He is great with her
and he knows his anger is more still.

He tenses up. C-sharp. Still, the key
is shallow stones. He knows it now.
The red-tailed fish talks and talks.
He cannot withhold. No secrets now.
You know he's trembling in his thought.
You are amused but not unkind. Kindred
you love all of him who rests in the
azure blue and golden hope of what he is
and knows he knows. The snake is dreaming
still. The One God does not love who wills.

You lean to him. He is not looking
your way or another. He does not feel
where fish or snake have gone. It is
your hand has taken him away from thought.
And if you smile or merely look
the trees withdraw like air into themselves.

The lion cannot claw. He cannot feel
his children longing for his brutal
easy love. The One God will not
let him go and lets him go. Now. Now.

The red-tailed fish is eager to move on.
The stones are willing to say no.
I am Aaron and the lion now at once.
The smooth snake kisses my strange mouth.
You are the bride of wonder I will know.

MARK HALPERIN

TWO POEMS

HOLDING HIM

Over here, over here.
I'm perched on the phone directory.
You're assembling a model ship, or we are.

But it's thirty years, and I'm too shaken
for those words. The sleeves of my shirts
seem pinned flat. I forget. I tell him

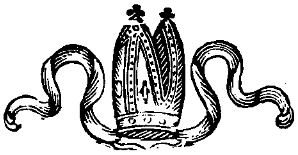
when he asks, nothing hurts
Dad, and wonder what does and what
could, holding him, holding his absence.

POLESTAR

He sights the polestar and between stained teeth,
when the moon's down and night's his house,
he feels a snarl beginning,
a sheath the gums pull back to unloose.

When he retells to his fears bookish ideas,
the Dipper blinks or nods, like someone
who means to cheer him. Are they ships,
faint lights hung on the horizon,

twisting like moths and not quite dead?
The stars point nowhere, their wobbling axis
close to straight up here.
What are beacons? How dare him? Who asks?



MARTIN KIRBY

THE POPE OF LITTLE ROCK

My elders banished us to Little Rock. We fled Memphis, crossed the great river, and in the twinkling of an eye I was an "assistant minister" of a well-moneyed congregation. We lived in a rent-free house and gathered manna on the lawn.

The local Pope wasted no time in summoning me. I resented these distractions. I was engaged in work of vital importance to the Church, wrestling with the greatest questions of existence, and big hairy pongidal brutes they were, too. I sulked all the way to the audience.

The Pope masqueraded, laughably, under the title of "Senior Assistant Minister."

"I'm Bunny Puryear," he said.

I uttered a low waa of greeting.

He shuffled my dossier.

"It says here you think you're a monkey," he said.

"Not true," I said.

"Quite a few folks seem to have gotten that impression," he said.

"They know not whereof they speak," I said.

The Pope conned the dossier. I plucked a bit of lint from his sleeve. He flinched.

"Grooming activity," I explained.

I told him about Goodall, my heroine, missionary among the chimpanzees.

"Are you a chimpanzee?" he said.

"I'm just a simple Christian hominid," I said.

"I'm not here to mess around, Brother Stobaugh," he snapped. "I asked you if you were a chimpanzee."

Anger is rare in the Church. Except for the elders we are a cheerful cult.

"No," I muttered, growing wary. "And call me Paul."

"Paul, let me help you," he pleaded.

He leaned forward, confidentially.

"Listen here," he said. "I've got troubles, too. My wife took our children and ran off to Wisconsin. Now what's wrong with *you*?"

I put my feet on his desk and got comfortable.

"Well, when you have the Truth it's a heavy burden, as you well know," I said. "Once I met an old lady in a nursing home. She said: 'I don't want nothin' to do with *you*. You people think I'm goin' to Hell.' And it was true, Bunny. Her apostate Wesleyite soul was going to plop right into the ol' lava because she was not a member of the Church. I had a vision, Bunny, of a rainbow of lost souls falling into the Lake of Fire like lemmings over a cliff."

"You're just going through a crisis," Bunny said. "We all have them. I don't believe for one minute that you've really lost your faith."

"I've got faith galore," I said.

He diddled the dossier. He beamed.

"I have a grant," he said.

He had a grant, this pontifical grantee, begged from concerned Christian businessmen, to help ministers of the Church through "spiritual crises." My job was a sinecure. I was to be barred from the pulpit, the Sunday School classroom and the distraught brother and sister. I could cooperate or get kicked out of the rent-free house and be forced to get a job as a social worker like all the other ex-preachers. My job was to let Pope Bunny save me.

"The Church is not going to let you go without a fight," he said.

"But who wants to go?" I said, astounded. "I love my Church. Let me at that pulpit. I have things to say."

"I bet you do," said Pope Bunny.

Bunny was the feistiest little Pope I ever did see.

"You're suffering, Paul, and I'm here to help you," he said.

"You couldn't even hang onto your own family," I snarled.

"You've got me there," he said. And he put his head on his arms and cried.

Some foolish popular writer once made a character say something like, "Love means never having to say you're sorry." Love, in fact, is a continuum of abject, cringing apologies. When my tearful Nora says *Why do you say those awful things? Why do you read those books? Why do you hurt me so much?* I hug her and kiss her and I say, *I'm sorry. I'm sorry*. And I am. I really *am* sorry to hurt her.

I loved this honest Pope, and I loved my nice Christian Church and, oh, I loved my nice Christian girl, my nice southern girl, mother of my children. She meant so well, my nice southern-Christian girl.

I patted Bunny's left scapula and said, "Hey, I'm sorry."

He looked up.

"It's not like me to be so nasty," I said. "I'm a little wrought up, I guess. I'm really sorry."

It was the password. He thought the campaign was half-won already.

So, the Pope of Little Rock and I met every morning for battle, our apical dendrites quivering like antennae.

"Let's have at it," he said, and he shoved a pitiable little C. S. Lewis at me. I smashed it flat with a single blow of my Darwin. But I was exposed and I barely had time to whip out a small Russell before I was driven back by a one-two punch of

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MARTIN KIRBY is a former newspaper reporter. He recently moved with his family to Georgia, after two years in Chicago.

Bonhoeffer and King. We pummeled and gouged in the dust. He sprang up and came at me with a naked Gandhi, but I whupped him upside the head with a Rolandian blow of my Nietzsche while my hideout Camus felt for his vitals. He jumped back and lobbed a small Buddha. I charged screaming through the fragments brandishing a Marx in one hand and a Lenin in the other. He dodged my wild blows and nicked me with a tiny Updike. But two can play that game and I nearly ripped his guts out with a keenly-honed Beckett. Panting, exhausted, we crouched facing each other, he with a broken-bladed Apostle Paul, I with a jagged sliver of Freud.

We were pros, Bunny and I, I'll say that for us. And we were buddies off the field. He was a daily visitor in my home, a second father to my children, a consolation to Nora. He lived frugally with his mother, who was not well, and our children brightened their lives. He spoke sadly to us of his poor drunken ex-wife and his own four children far away in Wisconsin where the Church was not strong.

"She nearly killed my little girl with her drunk driving," he mourned. "I would plant a bomb in every distillery, every brewery, every winery in the world, if only I could make sure no one would be hurt, and if it weren't against the law."

That was Pope Bunny—the profoundest student of sin I ever knew, next to me. Of course, Bunny wasn't content with being Pope. He was bucking for sainthood. I mean *real* sainthood. Not just diddly-squat sainthood like the rest of us Christians.

My Nora was quite unmanageable by the time Pope Bunny came into our lives. Once, I could unburden myself to her. I could murmur, "Honey, there are Popes in the Church, big ones, with clubs and bear-tooth necklaces," and she would be sympathetic, although perhaps she would not understand. But no more. I no longer dared to call myself a priest-wizard in her presence, or to invite her to admire the growth of my nuchal crest and massive bone-crushing jaws. I never wanted to hurt her, but a Christian must have a transcendent loyalty to the Truth. It was the old not-peace-but-a-sword syndrome all over again.

I am very attached to my healthy country girl, the fairest flower of central Arkansas, so well-fitted for bearing strong sons and fertile daughters. What a base canard that we fundamentalists despise sex. Maybe we *do* ring it about with a taboo or two, but that's because we are closer to the germinal spirit of religion than other religionists. Our critics are blind to the metaphysical richness of our inheritance from our good old dirt-farming Christian foredaddies. Anti-sex? Pshaw! Those long Sunday afternoons when we were first married, between morning worship and evening Bible study—Oh my! Didn't we bounce and tangle!

Nora ratted on me to my elders, and I know she conspired with them to turn me over to Bunny, and then she ratted continually to *him*. She did it because she loved me. She wanted me to lead a nice cozy Christian life without paying a tenth of a nevermind to the greatest questions of existence.

I was never satisfied with being a simple shaman. I ached to be a Pope even before I could put a name to my ambition, and our Church with its thousands of autonomous congregations offers broad scope to a dominant type who wants to carve out a nice little papacy for himself. We have a Pope at Nashville and another at Abilene, and I wasn't surprised to find one in Little Rock. I would have been a recognized Pope too, but the greatest questions of existence came knuckle-walking into my territory and I grunted and sweated with them so long and hard that I lost the true pre-papal oomph. Oh, you lapsed Catholics, you Jewish atheists, you second-generation educated skeptics, *you* don't know what it is to believe in baptism by total immersion and not to believe in God!

But then Pope Bunny came along and riled up my neurohormones, and I came to realize that I already *was* a Pope, albeit one without a see, and I realized too that Little Rock was as good a place as any to be Pope of—not so gaudy as Nashville, but a solid cut above Abilene. It was a peaceful riparian site, and I admired its softly contoured hills and lush vegetation, in some places almost as much forest as settlement. I whipped up a plot and got busy.

I don't think I'm any more hypocritical than the next Pope. Popery is a tough game. You don't play it in short pants. I fought Bunny harder and harder, stomped him good, left him barely able to crawl. Then I started letting him win.

"Bunny," I said. "Last night I dreamed I was running along a forest trail and I met Jean-Paul Sartre sitting on a log. I screamed: 'Give me back my nice Christian Church!' But he squatted there, bored as a toad, and his tongue, which was rooted in the front of his mouth, shot out and held rigid. And from that tongue, Bunny, mark this well, dropped a tiny banner inscribed with the words '*mauvaise foi*'."

"Sartre was Schweitzer's cousin," he said.

"Aha, Bunny, you admire Schweitzer? The Pope of Little Rock is a secret Schweitzer admirer? *Schweitzer was not a member of the Church!* He weltered in denominationalism! All the heathen appendixes he ever cut out wouldn't buy him a day in Heaven! I've got you there, Bunny!"

He gibbered: "Well, my goodness, Paul—!"

"He played the organ in church, Bunny! And after that the piano! A zinc-lined piano! The New Testament says, 'Sing and make melody in your hearts.' *There is no scriptural authority for zinc-lined pianos in worship services!*"

"I don't presume to say whose worship is acceptable," he huffed.

"What Church do you belong to, Bunny? What Bible do you read? Whatever happened to speaking where the New Testament speaks and being silent where the New Testament is silent?"

Thus I accused him of heresy on the central point of the Church's doctrine, and I couldn't have hurt him more if I had bitten off one of his long floppy ears. I stood up as though to leave him alone with his pain and his shame.

"I smell an ecumenist here," I sneered.

"Hypocrite!" he hissed. "You lecture *me* about the Church and *you* don't even believe in God."

"Raca," I croaked. "Raca. Raca. *Raca!*"

I collapsed ostentatiously in my chair and beat the desk with my fists as though in a paroxysm of guilt and self-doubt.

"I wanted so much to be the spiritual leader of millions, Bunny," I whimpered.

Bunny's microagnathic jaw twitched with triumph.

I went home and brachiated exultantly on my Jungle Gym.

From then on I acted as though I had turned a spiritual corner. I started wearing a nice neat suit. I purged my speech of disturbing allusions. I let Bunny take me on his rounds of the sick, the dying and the generally troubled, black and white, all over Pulaski County, even unto Jacksonville, Gravel Ridge, Hensley, Ferndale, College Station, and Sweet Home. Pope Bunny and the plain Christians were very *simpatico*, and he was much in demand as a chaser of evil spirits and all-round consoler. Soon, I too was clasping palsied hands and muttering propitiatory incantations. I began serving as a minor functionary during worship services, and I pretended to neglect the greatest questions of existence.

I yielded territory steadily, letting Bunny win a fight here, a skirmish there. Bunny and Nora were very thick, always huddling to hash over my spiritual progress. I took care to toss off lots of pro-Bunny remarks, which hardly passed my lips before Nora delivered them to Bunny, who was nicely softened up. He was too innocent to be a first-rate Pope. A real Pope's got to know what's what. Little Rock was overdue for a strong new Pope.

I spread my cave-in over about two months; then I faked a spectacular re-conversion crisis. Bunny held my hand all the way and tears of joy trickled over his lapine cheeks.

On the next Sunday morning I oozed to the front pew during the invitation song and latched onto the *real* assistant minister, one Jud Derryberry, not overly quick on the uptake. I said I had sinned and brought reproach on the Church and I wanted to get prayed for. He sent up about a five-minute job, whereupon everyone stampeded, but I caught him by the arm and said I wanted to be baptized again. Bunny sidled over, looking worried. I told them that I was eleven years old when I was baptized in the swimming hole at the Christian summer camp and I had come to suspect that I might not have reached the age of moral accountability then. Since baptism is for the remission of sins and since if you don't understand what sin is, you can't sin and therefore can't have any sins to remit, you might as well practice the backstroke as get baptized. So, if my baptism wasn't valid I was *not* an erring child of God as Bunny had been supposing. *I was an alien sinner!* And God does not hear an alien sinner's prayers. I looked Bunny in the eye and told him this might have been the source of my troubles. I could pray for guidance till I was blue in the face but God's hands were tied because I wasn't even a proper Church member. It was a very neat point of Church theology. Derryberry was impressed and Bunny was dazzled.

They corralled a few straggling Christians and set them to hymn-singing while I went into a back room and put on the flowing white baptismal garment. Then I splashed into the baptistry where Bunny waited in his chest-high duck-hunting waders. He said the magic words and pushed me backwards. I was much too heavy for him, and I slipped loose and went to the bottom, kicking his feet out from under him. His waders got waterlogged. We thrashed and floundered like a pair of gut-hooked bullheads. Little Rock almost lost a couple of good Popes right then and there.

Nora was very happy and affectionate.

I gave Bunny a week to feel good before I asked him to let me preach.

"No," he said. "Wait a little while."

I asked him again a few days later.

"Not yet," he said.

"Look here," I said. "My name is out there on that sign as an assistant minister. Do you want me to draw pay under false pretenses?"

"I pay you and I'll say when you preach," he said.

Finally, he dragged me out to some dinky working-class congregation and let me give a standard basic-doctrines-of-the-Church spiel using a printed outline that he had approved in advance. A few similar engagements followed. I understood his caution. If I went berserk in the pulpit he might have to find a new base of operations for his preacher-saving project, and not for the first time. Before taking possession of the Holy See of Little Rock, Bunny had been a wanderer, a Pope-without-portfolio.

"I want to do whatever is best for the Church, Bunny," I said.

After some weeks I got to play the Palace, on a rainy Wednesday night with hardly a quorum of Christians present. Nothing fancy. Just twenty minutes of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. After that I exhorted the faithful pretty often, but when Bunny was out of town preaching for child-support money I was held on the very short leash.

"Don't you trust me?" I whined.

"I trust you, but my position is very delicate," he said.

It came to pass that from cold unchurched Wisconsin Pope Bunny's ex-wife sent word: His youngest child had to have surgery again, and probably yet again, the continuing fruits of the woman's attempt to drive on ice while drunk. Bunny was shaken. He promised money and a personal audience. He gave of himself, this good little Pope. He was not at all like the empty-headed Pope of Nashville or the foolish Pope of Abilene.

"She lets my children drink the dregs of her liquor," he said, sorrowfully.

He planned a two-week trip to Wisconsin, and it pleased him to use the occasion to test his preacher-saving prowess. He gave his sternest pontifical orders that I should be allowed to preach one Sunday evening sermon with no advance script conference. Derryberry and the titular minister trembled but obeyed. Then, bless his heart, Bunny made the rounds of the elders, a crew of rich mean old brothers, and gave them the word in a Christian way that I was going to solo and they could like it or lump it. These old boys had the tempers of a bunch of sweatbees and they didn't really like Bunny or his project, but they knuckled under, anyway. You very rarely find an elder with the nerve to cross a Pope.

I got rid of Nora by demonstrating that with Bunny gone her Christian duty demanded that she spend the evening fellowshipping with old Sister Puryear, who was perpetually providentially hindered. And, I hinted that I wanted to do my turn alone as an aid to my self-confidence. No doubt Bunny himself had whispered as much to her on the sly.

My time came round at last. The house was packed. I slouched to the pulpit. I took off my shirt and removed my antler headdress from its case and clapped it on my head.

"My beloved siblings in Christ," I began, "I wish to announce that Brother Bunny Puryear is no longer the Pope of Little Rock. *I* am the Pope now, and with your help and faith I expect to have a long and happy period of dominance.

"My predecessor was a great, gutsy Pope and we all love him, our popular little Poparoonee.

"However, I just out-qualify Bunny all over the place. The way I see it, if you're bucking for Pope—and you know he who desireth the office of Pope desireth a good office—you've got to have some pretty intense experience with sin and guilt, not to mention fear. Folks want a Pope who's been around.

"As regards fear, fellow Christians, I'm here to tell you that *I'm* scared. Twenty-four hours a day. My neurons shimmy like frog jelly. *That's* the mark of *real* guilt, gut-level guilt, the kind a Pope needs if he's going to have any kind of sanctity.

"As regards sin, brethren, a good Pope's sin can't be something he can just repent of and forget like knocking over a liquor store. Take Bunny. We all know he wasn't much at fault in that famous divorce of his. The woman just didn't have what it takes to be married to a Pope. That's all. But Bunny worries that he did something terrible. So he's got a really big sin stoking his neurons, never mind that it's ninety-eight per cent imaginary. That guilt swirling around in him made him a Pope and may yet make him a saint. Me, I just want to be Pope.

"My own personal sin is that I don't believe in God anymore. But it doesn't stop there. I've wrestled with the greatest questions of existence, and I've whipped 'em the best two falls out of three. But on that other fall they beat God out of me, friends. *But I love the Church!* And isn't that the main thing, to love our wonderful Church that gives us such beautiful childhoods and keeps us from going out and sinning up a storm?

"Now listen here, friends, brethren, fellow Christians—*I have purposed in my heart to have my Church and eat it, too!* Oh, I pant-hooted with joy when I thought of that! What a sin for a Pope! You get behind me and I'll show you a Pope in Little Rock that'll knock their eyes out in Nashville and wipe Abilene off the map!"

And so on. Now what did I say that was so awful? Why did they have to kick poor Bunny out? He could have stayed and saved preachers till Doomsday for all *I* cared. I might even have made him honorary co-Pope. I don't think he's happy up there in Wisconsin. Our Church evolved under the hot Southern sun, and it doesn't cross climatic zones very well, more's the pity.

No one shook hands with me after my sermon, but I suppose it's natural that ordinary Christians should hesitate to buddy up to a Pope. I could tell they were whopperjawed with awe.

I went home singing good old Church songs. By the moonlight I discovered a tarantula on the front sidewalk. Little Rock has a lot of tarantulas, and I think they give the old town a touch of class. But Nora doesn't like them, so I keep them thinned out. When confronted with a tarantula, we old Little Rock hands get a concave garbage can lid, stuff it with newspapers, set fire to the stuffing and toss the contraption over the spider, which usually will just sit there and let you do it. (Hominids have dominion over all things.) But this time when I took away the lid the flaming little beastie flounced across the yard and set fire to the dry grass, the unraked leaves, a few bushes and the picket fence.

I called the fire department. Then I called the regrettably few news media offices open on Sunday nights and announced that the newly-invested Pope of Little Rock would hold a news conference immediately. The firemen arrived. I was on my way to bless them when the telephone rang. It was Bunny.

"I'd like an explanation for what happened tonight," he said.

"Well, Bunny, I saw a see in Arkansas and I grabbed it," I said.

He seemed upset, and it looked like he was going to draw out the conversation.

"Look, Bunny, I'm very busy," I said. "The press will be here soon, and I have to bless the firemen. Regards to the wife. Tell the little girl I said get well soon. I know you'll get them all back someday. Y'all come to see us. We'll put out a contract on the fatted calf."

Firemen, policemen and well-wishers filled up the house. Soon, the reporters, photographers and television people arrived. They had never seen a live Pope before, much less one so stylish as I. I passed out Cokes and cookies and we all had a good time.

I was giving an impromptu talk on Christian hominidism when Nora and the tadpoles came in. I took off the headdress. She never liked for me to wear it in public. We looked at each other. I was galvanized with love. I had chosen a long hard row to hoe, and I knew I couldn't make it without my wonderful beautiful sweet Christian girl. She buried her face in my chest, and then she looked up at me and I knew that this time she was going to come down on me with both feet. . . .

Oh well. Popery is *my* line. Leadership. Not thaumaturgy. If a Pope can't count on the regular Christians he might as well hang up his headdress. The trouble with this burg is that the local Christians don't give a waa about the greatest question of existence. I mean, here I am, the rightful Pope of Little Rock, caged up like a sooty mangabey, and the godforsaken place is perfectly Popeless. ☐

ROSS TALARICO

TRYING TO GET BACK

The eyelids close now and then
In fear of extinction,
Their light lowers itself, secretly,
Into the dark waters of
The hermit's river,
Where we were born . . .

Come down, moon,
I am blind.
Disappear into the waters of earth
For a change.
The small fires die out, twice,
On the bank, and under the river.

I cannot remember the
Darker inclination, to see the mere
Traces of form, to hear the first
Murmur of current,
Something lost, something blue . . .
Tonight, one man's escape begins the process:
Sirens filling the woods with old cries,
The flashlight's beam in the hermit's shack,
A flame growing under a glass bulb;

The pages of a book flipping backwards.

CHRISTINE LEHNER HEWITT

A MICK & GIL STORY

for Alex

Mick and Gil are walking the dog down by the river. It is an okay day, considering they live in the city alternately known as the Sepulchral City and the City of Torsos. Shiva is a very old bulldog. Besides having a left hind leg that frequently goes out of joint, she is asthmatic. Gil is listing, aloud, the fruits and vegetables he would be eating, fresh, right now if he lived in California instead of in the Northeast.

"Avocados, for one, and scallions and persimmons and guavas and papayas."

"I've never had persimmons, but I don't like papaya. Bland as sunny weather?" says Mick.

"You will," says Gil. Inside his pocket, Gil's hand is tearing away at the last threads that keep the pocket intact. "The lack of fresh fruit is just symptomatic of the greater disease."

"Symptoms are something that interest me," says Mick. "They are the lapsed metaphors of daily life."

Gil is watching Shiva's pace visibly slacken. Is Shiva irrevocably senile? That is a question Mick and Gil do not ask each other. Instead, they carry her up steep sidewalks she can no longer manage, and they look surprised when friends point out the extreme and aged ugliness of her wrinkled face.

"I spoke with a friend of yours this morning," says Mick.

"Oh yeh?"

"Yeh, while you were in the shower, washing away the sleep and those strange unnatural dreams."

"I'm interested; so don't blow it."

"She said her name was Tulip and that she met you on a plane, to London I think, but it may have been Dresden."

"Not likely Dresden."

"Anyway, she met you on this plane two years ago and now she's coming to see you. She says she's studying Mortuary Sciences at Forest Lawn. Is she really a friend of yours? Anyway, she has this theory that funerals have gotten out of hand, that they only cater to the remaining kin and that the deceased gets ignored. She wants to revivify—her word—the business so that the dearly departed are once again in the center of things; so that his or her feelings are taken into consideration. Her means to effect this, she says, will be direct lines of communication between the living—the funeral directors—and the dead. I asked her, and she says, no, she does not mean by placing telephones or walkie-talkies in the coffins. The lines of communication are to be invisible and tangible—her words again."

Mick looks over at Gil. The expression that was on his face minutes ago seems to have receded into the skull cavity; his skin seems like it should be translucent in the grey light, but it isn't.

"When is she coming?" Gil asks.

"Next week."

"We'll have to clean off the cot in the study. Shiva's hairs are as thick and furry as a new snowfall."

"Okay, but what about the fact that this woman is a mortician?" Mick's expression is quizzical, like a tangerine wrinkling.

"You know, I have this theory," says Gil. "It just came to me, that her presence could serve to separate the chaff from the wheat; perhaps even give us a chance to get rid of some of the deadweights around here, if you will forgive a lapsed something or other."

"I still think there's something creepy about going into that business. Dealing with all those dead bodies. They can't even talk back."

"So? Neither can dolls, or dogs."

Mick and Gil have the second floor of a large old house. When they return they discover that the door is open. They did not leave it open. They follow Shiva into the kitchen. At the table is a blonde woman eating cereal out of a plastic bowl that has a Goofy decal on its side. She must have brought the cereal—Sugar Pops are Tops—with her, because neither Mick nor Gil eat the stuff. The bowl, however, is theirs. It was given to them by Mick's sister, who is now a novice in a Dominican convent. She makes everyone very nervous. Gil recognizes the blonde woman.

"Well, surprise, surprise," says Gil, cheerily.

"It is a surprise, isn't it?" says Darlene.

"Just out of curiosity, how did you get in?" asks Mick. "No, don't tell me, I'll guess."

"I'll tell you, I'll tell you," says Darlene eagerly. "I have a skeleton key."

"She has a skeleton key," says Mick to Gil.

"She has a skeleton key," says Gil to Mick.

"Damned if she doesn't," says Mick.

"You guys are really funny," says Darlene.

Darlene is from southern California. When Gil knew her there she had been alternately a farm-hand in an organic community, and a go-go dancer in Santa Monica, besides having an imaginary life which she would willingly narrate when under the influence of drugs. He has not seen her since he moved East to study anthro. Now, she has brought with her: cereal, bean sprouts, tiger balm, two cans of chicken molé, a ten pound bag of oranges, some short skirts and lots of tee shirts. She is tanned, has watery blue eyes, and has a surfer knob just below her right knee. Her large feet are spread out across her Japanese straw sandals. She will not look in the direction of Shiva, who is dragging her sausage-like body back and forth between the three people in an effort to become the center of attention.

Not that anything is wrong with Darlene, but Mick and Gil would rather not have to deal with her at the moment. They are going to a party tonight. It will be given by a poetess they know. She is nice, but neurotic. When Gil told Mick who was going to be there, Mick said, "Those people don't know how to have a good time. That's what I've figured out."

"So," said Gil. "Are you going to do anything about it?"

"Maybe I will," said Mick. "Maybe I will."

Gil sits down with Darlene at the kitchen table that has a black linoleum top with what looks like cream swirling through it, while Mick goes off to take a shower. She has finished eating her cereal and is now tearing the box into small shreds. The colored cardboard makes a nice pile in front of her.

"You're wondering what I'm doing here, eh, Gil?" says Darlene. "It's a long story, and naturally it has a lot to do with my stars. The falling star is rising; the cusp is sitting on its haunches; I await the comet nightly and only see UFO's. UFO's litter the sky like broken glass, if you ask me. But this is what it amounts to, everyone in Redondo Beach says hello. And then I went to Guatemala and this revolution started and I had just met this far-out dude about two nights before and he turns out to be a drasty revolutionary gun-runner, with other plans for yours truly. The situation got to be so hot and sweaty, I almost thought I was in the tropics. So I met these weird East Coast types, traveling around and digging the ruins, burning up their pale pale skin, and I got a ride north with them. If you must know the truth, Mexico was a blur. But I ended up in Baltimore, and that didn't seem far enough, so I came here, only to remember you. Are you glad?"

"That's a great story, Darlene."

CHRISTINE LEHNER HEWITT lives in Providence, plays tennis, and "thinks about far-off countries."

"You want to see a photo of the revolutionary? Deep brown eyes that you can really get into."

"Hang on a minute, Darlene."

Gil goes into the bathroom to brush his teeth. He had been having the ominous sensation that his lunch was mildewing behind his molar cuspid. Mick is drying off with long athletic strokes of the towel. Gil never dries himself with a towel, but puts on a terry-cloth robe, shivers a bit, lets it happen naturally. Mick likes to dry. He likes the notion of polishing his skin.

"What are we going to do with her?" says Gil. "I won't tell you what she just told me."

"Just as well."

"When do we have to be there?" Gil carefully scrapes some tobacco stain off his front teeth with his fingernail. He tries to, but he can't remember whether Darlene was wearing fingernail polish or not. And what color would it be if she did?

"Dinner's in about forty minutes. So. What do we do with Miss Teenage Redondo Beach?"

"She's got plenty of cereal to last."

Mick has folded his towel and now, in the mirror, he is examining the hairs on his chest. "You've got to find out what she wants, how long she plans to stay."

"Everything in its own time, my man."

"Everything has its limits."

Gil leaves Mick alone with his clothes that hang from the shower rod. Darlene has dumped a mess of marijuana onto the table-top and is separating the seeds from the flowers. "I can roll like an old-timer," she says.

"We gotta go out tonight, Darlene."

"That's fine with me. I was thinking of going with you guys, but now I think I have a lot to do here."

"Like what?"

"It's hard to put into words."

Mick and Gil are standing at the door, giving each other impatient looks. Darlene watches them serenely from the kitchen table. "Get high on those poetic vibes," she says.

"Listen," says Gil. "Shiva's food is in that cabinet. That's the only thing she'll eat, but only give it to her if she whines."

"I understand not only the language of dogs, but of insects and rodents. Kind of a Franciscan quality."

Mick drives his Dodge Dart the eight blocks to the party. Gil finds a Patti Smith song on the radio. They sit in the parked car and wait until it is over. Inside, they sit in Cheryl's living room for a long time, eating Fritos and dip, drinking Tequila sunrises, describing new clubs that are good for dancing.

Gil says he wants to get a job as a waiter in one of them, and some people seem to think his remark is funny.

"I can't dance to this new music," says Maria. "My hips just won't move to it."

Mick nudges Gil. "They're living in the sixties, man." Gil nods. "Terminal nostalgia."

A Japanese fish kite flutters in the corner whenever anyone shuts the bathroom door too violently. The potted palm does not move at all, but seems to recede shyly whenever anyone gets too near.

"Do you talk to your plants, or do you think that's silly?" asks a tall, thin man with a David Bowie haircut.

"It's a problem I deal with the same way as I deal with the problem of talking to God. I mean, if he is God, can he read my thoughts or not? It comes down to this: is secrecy possible? Are we really free?"

"Plants don't care what you think, all they react to is the carbon dioxide you exhale. Boy, are you nuts," says Maria.

Mick and Gil only water their plants. This is a subject that doesn't interest them. Gil wanders into the kitchen. Three women, all with short curly hair, are spooning whipped cream onto their shoes and socks. Occasionally they kick their legs up into the air and shriek with delight. Gil gathers up all his aplomb and walks over to the sink for a glass of water.

"Are you thirsty, Gil?" asks one of the whipped-cream ladies, Melanie.

"Yeh." He looks out the window over the sink. It gives onto a driveway. At eye-level flutter drying clothes. They form a kind of cat's cradle awning.

"Do you like whipped cream?" she asks.

"Don't involve me in these games of yours," says Gil. He starts to move towards the living room again. Mick is standing at the door.

"Sometimes I think people like that should be locked up."

"Too much cholesterol," says Gil.

Mick and Gil lean against opposite ends of the doorjamb. Gil remembers that he doesn't know any of these people very well, that he has never read any of their poetry. Then he notices that Mick is wearing a new shirt, which he hadn't noticed until just now.

"Where'd you get it?" he asks.

Mick is watching a man in a harlequin outfit come in through the front door. He is followed by two afghan hounds. "I am the Prince of the Dominions," says the newcomer and spreads his arms to reveal holes in the armpits of his outfit. "And the Princess too," he adds coyly.

Everyone laughs nervously.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God," says Mick to Gil. His voice is breathy.

The harlequin sits on the floor in the center of the room and beckons his dogs to come lie close to him. They circle the room, sniffing, before they will settle down. The Prince/Princess assumes the lotus position and touches his head to each knee five times. "The room is blessed now."

No one speaks, but the sound of crunching Fritos is deafening.

Mick asks Gil, "Have we had enough of this?"

They whisper good-bye to Cheryl, the poetess, and leave by the front door. Out on the street, Mick starts eating pistachio nuts that he has in his jacket pocket.

"Nuts nuts nuts. The crunching and the nuts," says Gil. They both start laughing a lot.

It is colder now, on the drive back. From the street, they can see that all the lights are on in their apartment.

"We could always not go back in," says Mick.

"Yeh, that's what I was thinking. But then I thought of Shiva. We couldn't do that to her."

"You're right. There are certain things beyond consideration."

When they are climbing up the stairs, they can hear the clattering of plates within the kitchen.

"Everyone's noisy today," says Mick. □

BARRY LOPEZ

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

There came a point in his life, a point common to us all, when he decided to strip away his ties. Although he had left home some years before, he perceived there was still a bond, so he put that in order. He took care of it. He took possession of an independence which all men strive for and few attain, because they are detained (he realized) by the details of lives fashioned haphazardly, or too casually. He had known from the beginning what he would do. He would photograph endangered and possibly extinct animals. He would go to the places where the last of a species had been reported and he would systematically set about capturing the animals on film. Not quick, sharp photographs, which would have been satisfactory, surely, but portraits. He wished to make a gallery of such portraits of animals on the verge of extinction. To this end he spent some years, then, not in the study of photography but living on the reservations of the northern plains, among Crow and Blackfeet primarily but also on the Turtle Mountain Reservation with Chippewa hunters in North Dakota. From these men he learned enough of movement in the wild, of concealment and patience, to have some reasonable chance of success.

The first animal he chose was one of the hardest, the ivory-billed woodpecker. He thought privately that if he did well with this one, he would go back up on the plains and photograph the black-footed ferret. It had been clear to him from the beginning that his teachers did not think much of his hunting with a camera. It was like walking a long way to someplace just to get on a bus and come back. He harbored an uneasiness over the thought, but he knew his teachers were not white men and what he was doing, he explained, was for white men. One day, when he was finished, he would stop in some small town in Nebraska—Chadron would be nice—and go into a cafe (it would be a summer day, he could almost feel the thick heat, hear the screen door stretch and slam back in its frame) and he would give all the camera equipment to a family of tourists eating lunch. He would set the things down with them and go out the door and drive away.

But for now he was headed south, to the Big Thicket on the far side of the Trinity River in Texas to photograph the ivorybill. He rented a canoe in Lufkin and bought groceries and maps and with a confidence like granite (which he had also learned from the Indian hunters but which he could not recognize in himself) he penetrated the swamp. On the nineteenth day he saw an ivorybill. On the twenty-seventh he saw another and photographed it for half an hour before the bird became aware of his presence and flew off. On the fifty-first day, toward dusk, he located two birds in the branches of a sweet gum tree and began to shoot. The birds (he could sense they were gradually becoming aware of him, for he allowed himself to be seen; it was the part he found most exciting, his own gradual exposure) became used to him. As the sun settled on the western horizon and the long red-gold rays hit the birds they seemed to stand away from the branches, like supernatural creatures. The stout white bills looked like weathered chalk against the blue-black feathers and the red pompadour seemed irradiated with light as if about to burst into flame. The yellow eyes with their enormous dark pupils had a depth the man found startling, almost terrifying. It was exactly what he wanted. A portrait of an endangered species that would terrify. The sun went down. The birds receded into the darkness. He was sure of what he was doing. He left the swamp that evening.

He drove north and, as he had intended, photographed the black-footed ferret on the flat, dry plains of Wyoming. The weasel was swift and crepuscular and presented him with some difficulty, working in open country. He concentrated on making himself each day more invisible. Eventually he was able to photograph from a distance of less than twenty feet. One evening during a thunderstorm he caught a ferret looking over its shoulder exactly at the moment the prairie dimness disappeared under a stroke of lightning. This took almost three months, and he thought to himself that it would take three months to photograph each of the animals he wanted. It would take that long to find them, to get close enough, to create a photograph in which the look was unsettling. He thought the look he was after might seem to be anger, but he was not sure. It was just an expression, peculiar to each animal, which seemed truthful, as if in seeing his own stare returned he was stripped naked.

From Wyoming he went to the deserts of California to photograph pupfish. This was a lark. The fish were the prisoners of shallow pools. But it took three months anyway, waiting for the expression.

In the months that followed he photographed the small Everglade kite, the red wolf in the coastal swamps of Louisiana, the Labrador duck (listed as extinct by the Department of the Interior since 1875), the Mexican grizzly (photo-

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graphed at dawn in the Sierra Madre Occidental at 10,000 feet among yellow poppies), Cooper's sandpiper (listed as extinct), the California condor, the heath hen (listed as extinct), and the Eskimo curlew. He photographed the curlew last, on its nesting grounds in the arctic and then in Argentina where the bird summers. Curious about the quality of light in the southern hemisphere, he eventually went to the winter grounds of each of the birds he photographed, but there was nothing outside North America that held his interest.

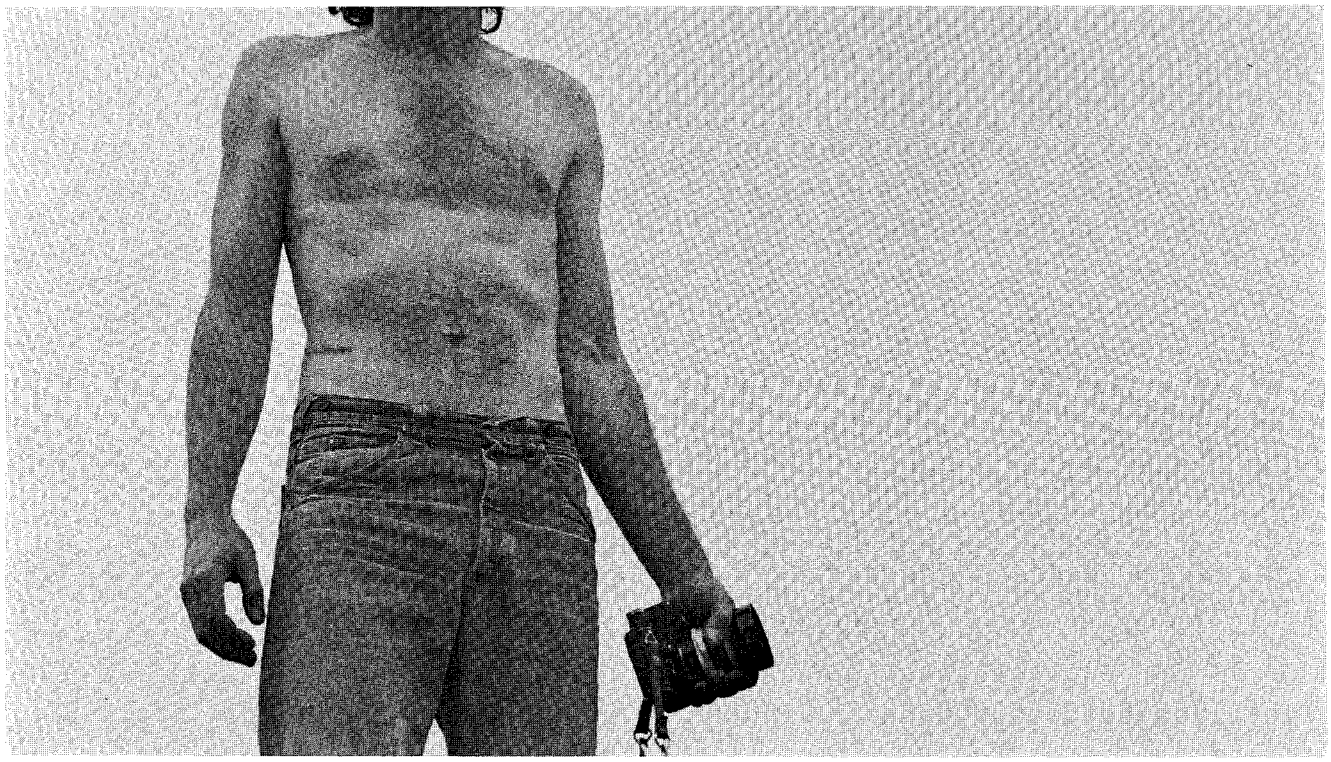
In eight years he made thirty-one portraits. He was thirty-seven years old, and he thought privately that he had done what he set out to do and that in an odd way he was now free to go. He had a series of prints made in the finest photographic studio in New York and took the portraits to the Audubon Society. He also delivered to them his extensive field notes, although he was careful to delete references to precise locations. He would not reveal his name, insisting that whenever the photographs were used they were to be credited "Anonymous." He accepted no payment, refused to make speeches or to accept assigments to photograph other animals.

At first the excitement over the photographs was incredible. Everyone who saw them was stunned by the lighting in the faces, by the positioning of the heads. But there was something unsettling about the portraits and initial enthusiasm gradually changed to a sort of fear. The portraits, which had been hung on the walls of a long, wide hallway, were taken down after a week and stored, very carefully, in the Society's library.

A meeting was held at which it was decided that the curious reaction people had had—first general astonishment, going almost numb at the looks, then uneasiness and finally, they agreed, a primitive fear—was no reason not to produce a special issue of the Society's magazine. It would be an extraordinary publication. No expense would be spared. In addition to the photographer's notes reproduced facsimile, they would commission the greatest bird and mammal writers in the country—Teal, Peterson, Brooks—to do pieces. They would include for contrast the faded, torn, fuzzy black and whites, the odd blurred snapshots taken by lucky tourists that up until now had been the best available. There would be introductory essays by the president of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and by the Secretary of the Interior. Reproductions of the thirty-one photographs would be offered in gift sets at $2500, the money to be set aside to provide sanctuaries and to cover legal expenses in lobbying for new protective laws.

The day following the meeting the photographs were removed from storage and work was begun. A room was cleared, the photographs were hung around the walls and work tables were set up in the middle. The photographs had only been up for a day when they began to fade. In spite of desperate measures taken by the most gifted technicians the photographs faded beyond recognition in a matter of hours and it was not, incredibly, until they were all but gone that anyone thought to photograph the photographs. The man who had been director of the project for special publication wished to take what was left of the photographs home with him as memento, but it was finally decided that they should remain at the Society's headquarters. They were inventoried for tax purposes and the loss, an enormous one, was written off the following year.

The man who had taken the photographs stopped at a small town in Nebraska where, as he had intended, he gave away his cameras. He proceeded northwest to the Crow Indian Reservation where he stayed for some months before moving to Alaska where each day he rowed about Norton Sound in a small boat, miles from the coast. He thus began to study the behavior of humpback wales. ☐



Kenneth Lash

TV: The Minus Multiplier

Popular thought about the harm of recreational television* focuses on a superficial aspect and reaches a simplistic conclusion: that the fault is in the programming, not in the mechanism. The programming is the presumed contaminant—too much violence instructing and inspiring both children and adults; too much lowbrow-highbreast situation comedy, telling and re-telling one long dirty joke; complex world events narrowed, simplified into "news" and served up as entertainment; zombies presented as people, and people zombified. And of course, "too much advertising." All of this is true enough. If we are what we eat, we also are what we see. (The monkey in us survives.) But if that were the whole problem we'd be on Easy Street. Any inspired cop could clean it up.

The gothic element in television is the fact that the larger harm it does is not a function of its programming, and therefore not amenable to clear remedy. The harm, as in McLuhan's blithe message, is rooted in the medium itself.

Let's imagine for a moment a Golden Age of television programming: nothing more violent than the Pittsburgh Steelers; nothing less well-written than *Barney Miller; Upstairs, Downstairs* running forever, *The Ascent of Man* running forever; Luigi Barzini doing the world news.

What would be the essential difference?

To begin with: would people be watching *less* television? (This is a required change in our relation to the medium, since no activity whatever that consistently removes our attention and energies from those living others around us can be healthy.) Theoretically, better programming would promote *more* television watching. Catch-22. Actually, the difference would probably be minimal, with an initial drop-off by the disgusted schlock-lovers. But little by little they'd go back, even to good programs. (Ask Hollywood: movies can be sold even if they're good. Not if they're complicated.) The underlying fact is that most viewers watch television not to watch programs but to watch television. ("What's on tonight?" is as question close to "What's for dinner?" The answer more or less pleasing, but the event assumed.)

You know that mood, when you'll watch anything? That's a key. That's what tells us that the essential appeal of "doing" television is *not-doing* something else. *Not* talking, *not* thinking, *not* worrying. Negative space. Time killed dead, until workaday routine recycles us.

The twentieth-century human seems by and large not prepared—neither trained nor educated—to cope with the amount of spare time built into post-industrial living. Without old customs of communal participation to drain it off, he is faced with the problem of changing spare time into leisure. This is an alchemical change, not at all easy to bring about. Until one learns to do something with it, spare time is at once both an opportunity and a threat. There is menace in "empty" time. Leisure involves relaxation by doing. "Time off" is just what the term implies: time away from doing. The dream of the effortless, the "little peace," the snooze in the cool shade. And along comes television—post-industrial civilization's remedy for the spare time and drabness of day it has created.

The function of television as a force is to "use up" empty time without disturbance. Or to take disturbing time—children, budgets, thought—and empty it.

Thus its essential use is that of an opiate.

Thus the essential desire for its use is to attain passivity.

So *the essential requirement is that it be unreal*. Regardless of content, i.e., of programming.

However, in order to "work"—to entice and excuse—it must *feel* real; it may feel "realer than real," as is customary with many drugs. Thus its predilection for violence, disaster, "news"—truth intensified to falsehood; and thus at the same time its necessity to de-fuse that violence—to make murder harmless or justifiable, obscenity amusing, disaster entertaining—which is truth diluted to warm milk. A great deal of trouble is taken, talent spent, to arrange real elements in such a way that they will at the last add up to unreality. It is tricky. It is a method derived from "ratiocination," which has to do with the processes we all use to lie to ourselves, to perceive situations as we prefer to perceive them emotionally rather than "as they are," as our reason would show them to us if we let it.

We all have an emotional investment in television. To the extent that it is a lie, so are we. To the extent that it is good and true, so are we.

Let's consider for a moment "good" television—dramas, specials, documentaries. The medium at its best. Having watched "Civilization," has one become more civilized? Or merely more literate—the polished axe. Did the documentaries of the Vietnam War halt the Vietnam War? Slow it down? Does it enlarge you or diminish you to be told and re-told that life has just so many plots, that the same things happen again and again to different people? Did "The Ascent of Man" contribute to your self-esteem? Or as with many do you best recall the scene of Jacob Bronowski lifting mud of Auschwitz into his cupped hands, holding it out to you, letting it fall? It is evil that fascinates. The good may live after us, but it doesn't photograph well.

Am I arguing that the medium must "improve" life, somehow "change" us? Of course I am. Or rather I am taking the "change" element as a given. Television is a popular art, the most popular popular art in all history. Popular art influences, changes, has an effect. The only question here is, what kind of

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*Recreational as opposed to instructional. The use of television for instruction, for educative communication of many kinds, has great potential and great problems but it is not the subject of this article.

effect? I have posited numbness as effect. Hallucination as effect.

Let's consider cause. A root cause of television's effect is the nature of film as a medium of *comprehension*. As a medium of communication film is ultra-powerful; as a medium of comprehension it is unprincipled. The photograph lies. All art lies: the question is one of manner and motive.

The still photograph lies by its particular manner of abstracting, by "freezing" a moment or gesture, removing it from context, from "flow." (Hence its "scientific" feel, and its usefulness to science and pseudo-science.) In so doing it both monumentalizes the moment (by isolating it) and at the same time reduces it (the moment is "captured"—browsing through a book of photographs is like browsing through a zoo).

Still photographs arranged sequentially, serially, and "moved" presumably restores context, flow. To an extent it does. But it does so at the cost of swinging to the opposite extreme of the still, which exists in whatever time frame the viewer cares to give it. In the "moving" picture the time frame is dictated, determined for us. Time becomes an essential part of the "illusion" of the moving picture, as vital as the images themselves. Despite its greater flexibility than print or stage, cinema "time" remains for the most part linear. Tracked. Once set, it moves like an automated train toward its terminus (the mythic village, *Finis*). No rest stops. No requests for slowing, time to look harder here, consider more there, a moment to consolidate. All that is done by the Director, the great mother-bird pre-chewing the experience before dropping it down our beak. We are claustrophobically caught in moving-picture time, helpless to get out unless it's our own camera. And this tight, enclosed, rush of the medium ("rushes") is essential to the overwhelmingness of the moving picture. We are "swept up" in it—which means successfully subjected to its pace, to its symbols, to its abstraction of complex and varied events into highly concentrated and simplified "mood."

It is true that the photograph *can* amplify. It is also true that the photograph *does* simplify. Reduce. Homogenize. If we can smell neither blood nor roses, then why are they not interchangeable? They are, which accounts for much of the visual punning which since Cocteau passes for cinematic innovation.

The abstractive characteristics of the photograph and movie are compounded by the infinite repetitiveness of television. Repetitiveness both horizontal (the ongoing "series" replicating itself week after week) and vertical (one series duplicated by another). A great deal has been written about film being the particular medium of our time because it transcends previous art forms in its ability to portray totality of experience, psychological third-dimensions, the modern high-speed polyvalence of life. Certainly to an extent it can. But since in most cases film is still used as a story-telling device it has retained two-dimensional linearity at its core, merely transforming it to electronic linearity. With the speed of light and pinpoint focus it goes right through the eye onto the mind's screen, lights it up, shows its story, and leaves. It's nice being shown stories. It creates a hunger. Tell it again. And again, thus surmounting a traditional problem of the linear: its tendency to go from A to B to C and finally end. Now we have linearity combined with the Möbius strip, the circular repetition of the half-turned loop.

It is certainly a profound hunger that can be appeased by Continuous Showings, yet left intact. Television enters new territory here, new applications of technology's gift of non-stop replication. At their best the photograph and film *use* technology; at its best, worst, and in-between television *is* technology. It *is* that world.

As we have discovered, a great problem of that world is that replication reduces worth. The worth of its product and the worth of living in its world. It opposes our wish for identity by swamping us in the identical. Nothing, nothing at all, can withstand repetition without losing the edges that make up its distinctive shape. Training, of course, aims at the loss of such edge; indoctrination aims at the loss of such edge. Routine, habit, "this vegetable life," all do. Edge is individuality. Living shape, no two snowflakes alike. Truth has greatest edge . . . until it is sufficiently repeated. Cliché is our term for what's left of repeated truth. The unfelt facsimile.

Television not only produces cliché by repetition, but for the most part *aims* at cliché. It works to establish a *type*, appealing either to like or dislike, then grinds it out. Edith, Fish, Johnny, Donny, Fonzie; Walter, Barbara, Eric. Machined Molière. These are not offered us as people but as patterns. Simplicity. Easy to learn, easier than people to live with because they're reliable, consistent, cleansed of threatening variations. No damned change. What a relief in an inconstant world.

Instant cliché aimed with reasonable skill at the mind will produce a predictable reaction, i.e., an emotional cliché. Sometimes television seems like one final Pavlovian project: the grub laid out, the mental and sentimental saliva measured. The Nielsen test. There must of course be the illusion of emotion—shock, sex, sugar—but not to the extent of transgressing the general disturbance threshhold. The depicted experience may be sharp and palpable, but it must not linger on, not leave residues of turbulence.

An essential characteristic of television is that it exercises the emotions without affecting us. We are moved, but do not move. We view change and are not changed. It is on one level the ultimate safe experience. It is on most levels the ultimate non-experience.

The irony lies in how real it can seem. Television documentary, for example, may offer the most powerful facsimile of experience yet discovered. But it is hollow. It is—to repeat—only a facsimile because, 1) film is reductive by nature and simplistic by most use, 2) the *experience* is so repeated as to ride up over content, i.e., the viewer tends to experience *a*

documentary rather than *the* documentary, and 3) it proposes that experience can be experienced in passivity. It cannot. It can only be watched. As a eunuch might watch.

Television is emasculating. It is founded on passivity. Fed, fondled, and fertilized by passivity. With the exception of children having first experiences or impassioned imaginings, or adults occasionally offered that childlike experience, one does not interact with television. There is nothing to do, no part to take, most often not even the organic simulacrum of beginning, middle, and end to undergo (most shows being in a state of wide-eyed perpetuity, like Little Orphan Annie). What can one *do?* Reflect? reread? slow down or speed up? argue? underline? No. One can turn it up or down, red or green, on or off. What one usually does is stare. It is much closer to stare than look. We watch it like a cat. Curled and cozy, we stare. We could look if it moved, but it doesn't. It is there tomorrow as it was today. Static. The Unmoving Moving Picture. Grouped in front of it the unmoving and unmoved "family." Supine, staring, stoned.

Television may possibly be what man has sought since the earliest terrors of his existence—a free opiate. Available, inexhaustible, and approved by the government for family use. It may well prove equally possible that television is what government has sought since the earliest difficulties of dominating over diversity. How marvelously the medium diminishes difference (tribe, region, community); how magically it confirms what it proposes, conforms what it portrays. How dark and deep lie its still unused potentials for behavior modification. Historic potentials, as with Hitler's sound belief in the repeated lie overcoming fact, since historic truth has always been what people believed, chose to believe, or could be led to believe, regardless of fact. "What will they swallow, Goebbels?"

Well, at the moment we are swallowing television in average daily doses of 4-5 hours. Taken by children and adults across the nation, across a wide spectrum of class, education, and condition. Say one-fourth of our total waking hours. Three-fourths of our time after work. Spent in a state of chronic paralysis. Skills slide down in schools, family interaction and activities shrink, the level of active communality required by a vigorous society recedes.

Our passivity varies, always, in proportion to the manipulative power of the vehicle. For example, the most powerful vehicle in human existence is the dream. All the others—arts, persuasions, cosmetics, and cars—use the techniques of dream, and approach as closely as they can to its powers. The essential powers of dream are metaphoric, but the "active" power of the metaphor derives from its absolute freedom from the "expected" limits of time—historic sequence is suddenly sprung loose, floats freely, attaches to bits and pieces of experience at will, forming new combinations, flashes of permutation. Clock-time is helpless in dream, is itself only "dreamed." All imagination—waking dream, if you like—must escape clock-time for its effects, its power, its necessary condensation and compression of experience into *an* experience. Film also must free itself of time. Its major method is not, as cinema theorists argue in print, an escape from print's linearity, but rather a solution to Laurence Sterne's complaint that you can't write fast enough to record a day's life in a day. The moving picture is the best art vehicle we have for compressing time. It can go faster than life.

Let's consider this power—the compression of time—and some of its effects. We all know that time is elastic, that it passes quickly when many events of a pleasant or even neutral character are strung together (a "busy" day), that it passes slowly when few or painful events are "strung out" (the dentist's waiting room, his chair). The moving picture, a series of stills abstracted out of time and patched together in an eye-deceiving flow, does not from its inception exist in "real," i.e., normally-paced, time. No work of art does, but in dealing with print, for example, the *reception* takes place in the particular time frame of the reader. In staged drama, as Aristotle pointed out, the handling of time is crucial. It must be so reduced in its larger aspect that staged events take place in an "actual" time-space continuum—actors move in the normal frame of movement, speak and respond within the posited bounds of the group; the conflict is heightened but the resolution takes place at living speed. In "freeing" the event from these limits of print and stage, the moving picture moves it outside time-space reality to arbitrary realms of time, space, and motion (the "magic" screen). These are realms familiar to us only in dream. (Thus the characteristic closeness of the moving picture to dream, "stars," the nightmare and astrology of Hollywood.)

This outside-of-reality speed of image is also outside of reality in terms of viewer reaction time. We can't keep up. The film-makers compensate for this according to their aim. If they want to overwhelm us, drown us in it, they crank it up and let it go. ("Innovative," "avant-garde," "psychological.") If as is usual the story line is important then simplicities of characterization and action will be employed—what used to be called archetypes: qualities of character and outline of event that are at once both simple and familiar, instantly recognizable to all, in fact, symbolic. If television rather than cinema is involved a further step is usually taken: a conscious "slowing down" is incorporated into the body of the film, by such simple devices as repetition and "blank" (non-event) moments. Presumably television must allow for a lower brow; actually it must allow for the interruption by commercials, which cannot help but distract but must not destroy comprehension. (Most commercials are now "acted," so as to merge a bit more into the story-medium.)

Thus by one means or another we are not overwhelmed. We are absorbed. The aim, the measure of success, is that little circle, that bull's-eye of absorption. That must be achieved or at least closely approximated regardless of what's occurring on the screen. That is, regardless of program content. So, once again, the aim of the television program is the same, is unvarying, no matter what the program—news, western, comedy, killing documented or killing imagined. We are first to be enticed, then held. ("Goddammit, if somebody sees one goddam minute of this program and is still able to switch off or across to another then this goddam program is no goddam good!") So, despite Hamburger Helper, the pace must be fast enough to sweep us along. Ideally it would be that precise speed which while it does not drown us does not allow us to swim out toward the bank.

And so we are engaged, sprocketed to x frames per second, and held. This is "the fix." The depth of fix would seem to depend upon speed of event filmed (physical and/or emotional event) times emotional-reaction rate of the viewer. (I wonder if it might be calculable by a combination of eye-movement photography and alpha-wave recorder.) This "capturing" of attention is basic to all the arts. What differentiates television is its character as machine art and its ability to elicit not only the traditional "willing suspension of disbelief" but the willing suspension of all but illusory control. At some point in the mechanically unvaried pace of television the experience of watching seems to move the human toward trance, toward edges of hypnosis. One is, quite literally, absorbed by, into, the machine (into the process rather than the product). This may account for the difficulty of turning it off, the feeling of helplessness reported by some viewers once they are fairly into an evening of viewing. Certainly it helps explain the "melting snowball" character of television viewing—the vagueness of it (of the *watching*) as an actual event in one's life, the experience fading from mind within moments of the program's fading from view (though one may "remember" the program), and the unparalleled emptiness that wells up in a room when the set is turned off late in the evening. One has lost the state of absorption. "It's murder to turn it off," a friend says. Sure it is. It's not like sleep, "a little death"; more like "a little cold turkey."

The cinch that ties the bundle tight is that television appears to be free. Free in the obvious way, which is not so obvious in its tie to old tales of the ever-filling pitcher. Use all you want; it will fill right up again. A folk dream come true. (With its underlying assumption that it came true because we deserved it, in our honest goodness and generosity.)

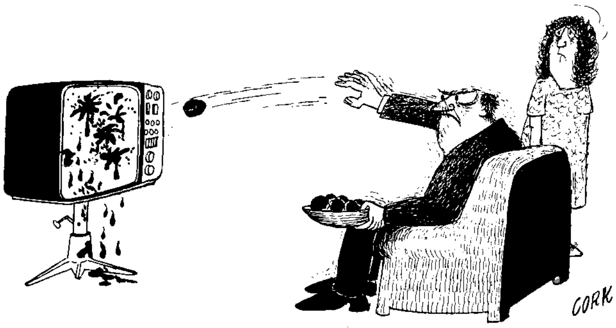
Television is not in fact free. It is painlessly charged, inside the cost of things, like a hidden tax collected daily. The price per viewer is small, the price of the art is staggering, history-making, an epochal provision of "circuses."

Still, television convincingly *appears* to be free, indeed appears to have a variety of freedoms clustered about it. Yet its essential gift remains freedom *from*. Television reception. It is the dream of receiving without giving. What do you need to give television? Your time. Of which you evidently have such a surplus that you can't wait to give it away; it is given with a sigh of relief, as if the world were being lifted from Atlas's shoulders. Now one can rest. Nothing more will be asked.

Nothing is the important payment demanded for the use of television. Ironically it is also what gives television its overwhelming edge in competition with alternate forms of activity. That and its utter accessibility. There it is, day or night, good weather or bad, for richer or for poorer. A few steps away, a turn of the knob: an empty room is lit up, visited, inhabited. No phone calls, arrangements, expenses, competitiveness, cleaning up after company. Just us, me, cozy under my own roof. And with a perfection of power. *I* turn it on. *I* can turn it off. Can I?

Human passivity combined with the illusion of choice: what a century for dictators! And of course it is a medium that dictates. It dictates life styles, reality concepts, expectation, belief, dream. And that without half trying. Merely as a business. What is to be expected when these amateur behavior-modifiers become truly professional, i.e., arms of government?

There is one more essential ingredient in television watching: guilt. Without it, the experience would be simply too bland for extensive repetition. The guilt—way back in the mind or a shadowy exasperation in the heart area—only in lesser part owes to its ordinarily ascribed cause: that the program or programs did not adequately repay our expense of time and attention. (Contrarily, "good" programs are often our excuse for viewing; we throw worth-whileness at our guilt.) The basic, bottomless, source is our sense of guilt over indolence, of cheating on our resolve. This is a complex affair, involving not only revenge for centuries of work ethic but expressing the simultaneous infatuation with the simplified notion of leisure, that lovely time of idleness heretofore reserved for king and court. The entertainments, the titillations, the sweetmeats. It was the polar opposite of toil and dirt and exhaustion, and thus a dream. The opposite of having to justify our existence by unremitting work. A dream now in part realized physically by one of the industrial revolution's results: large segments of society provided with considerable opportunity for physical indolence, both on and off the job. Then comes post-industrial society which, via television, produces cumulative centuries of indolence every day . . . and not only lovely physical indolence but *mental indolence* as well. Both in the same package. Integrated indolence. An historic achievement.



Can we resist it? There it is, that knob. How it beckons! A tiny twist and trouble is postponed, emptiness filled, all effort banished. It turns on; I turn off.

It is possible that reality cannot compete with television.

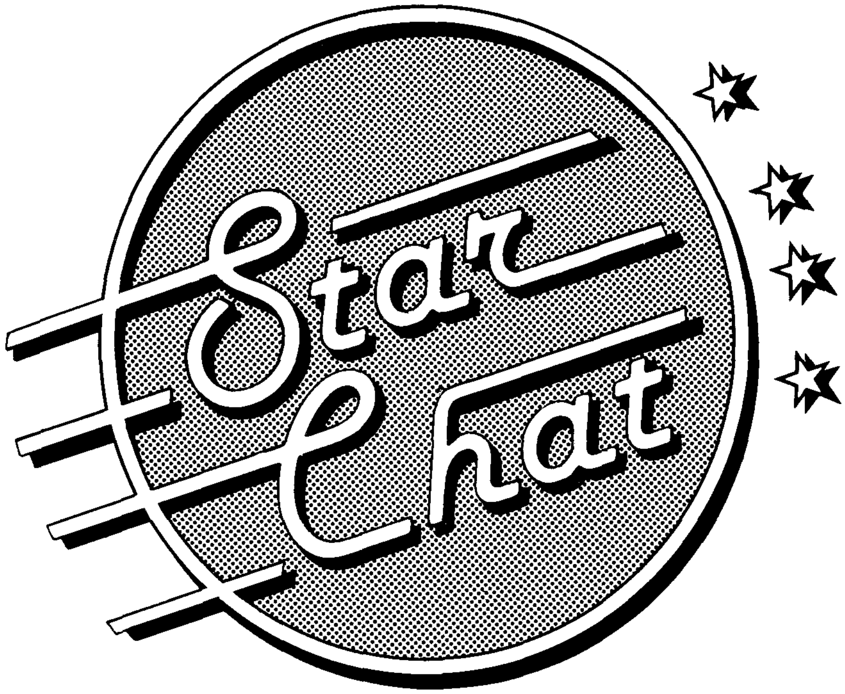
That is to say, that living cannot compete with the blessed relief of non-living.

Concentrated consumption of the unmoving picture is a terrible indictment of life, or of the contemporary human being as insufficiently evolved, ill-adapted to life as it presents itself to us in the late twentieth century. Unable to live with each other in such number and under such conditions. The choice of the separateness, the loneness, of television bespeaks our fear of each other. (Symbolized by the violent programming, Grimm tales for adults told at bedtime.)

Civilization may not depend on our liking each other. Survival certainly does depend on our tolerating each other.

Maturity comes from looking things in the eye. From looking people in the eye. Not from looking *it* in the eye.

Television is producing a walnut veneer of sophistication over wet, immature wood. Saplings. They may either continue to bend before anything . . . or they may harden into such crooked shapes that only a surrealist or science-fictionist can imagine the coming landscape of their world. ☐



This is a big week for all concerned. Events will occur right and left. Life is a non-stop ride. Weather all day every day—accept! Good posture will benefit everybody. If X doesn't happen this week, Y or Z probably will; if it's not one thing it's two others. Hang on tight.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)
Time is change. Get this through head. Accept departure of your lover; learn to thrive on heartbreak. You're not the first, kiddo. Pleasures of solitude are numerous: indulge yourself, drop fingernail clippings on carpet if you wish. Watch for tall Leo who claims to know astrology, says your moon is a virgin—this is false. Remember contraception. Don't forget multiplication tables either. Practice, practice. Focus on ultimate goals: sex, money, tennis trophy. If racquet breaks, re-string before next match. Eat, sleep. Keep cool. Key idea: What the hell?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)
Emphasis on everything. Amazing week for you—everything matters! No trivia in your life! Don't bother reading newspaper: you are biggest news in town. Spouse or future spouse astounded by your prowess. Follow through on urge, hunch—you must be right. Wear anything you like, including plaid pants. Eat a lot, especially artichokes, but avoid alcohol so as to appreciate environment. Everything happens at once, or in succession. Brush after meals. Floss too. All systems go. Sex is in your thoughts at night, and in morning, and 'round about suppertime. Let all hang out.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)
Abandon hope for week. Everything hits fan. Your lover or parent discovers truth about "bananas" in your dresser. May as well stay in bed. Beating up an Aries won't help. Do not invest in lawn chairs. Sell lawn, in fact. Brood about past when you were younger, future when you'll be older. You poor schlep.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
Accent on health. Take temperature five times a day. Normal is 98.6. Memorize this to save time, trouble. If sick, try to get well. If well, continue your work, but not like chicken with head cut off. Wear gloves even on hot days. Don't throw money in sewer. If on tricycle, pedal slowly. Learn to spell your sign, boss's name, own name. If election arises, vote for candidate of your choice. Sex is in your thoughts, but unsafe this week; use books as substitute. Avoid extremes, germs, dogs, siblings. Hope for best.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
Accent on romance. Watch for short dumpy Taurus with vapid grin and huge libido. He/she could be the one! On dates, show your intelligence. Open doors with hand, not foot. Eat with fork, not hand. Discuss viability of New York Times Book Review. You can call shots, dance to own tune, streamline procedures, dispense with wig. Speak English. If Taurus asks for money, feign nonchalance, take bank loan. All will be well till next week at least. Family member drops piano on toe; sympathize. Spotlight on lips: kiss mirror to stay in shape. Eat, sleep.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
Travel looms large. On buses and planes, fasten seat belt. On trains, make friends with conductor; learn names of his kids. Send them a crate of oranges. Philanthropy is own reward! While traveling, ponder difference between destination and Fairbanks, Alaska. Your curiosity may lead to odd experience with garlic bread. Roll with punches. Don't give your camera to just anybody who wants it. Carry money in hat, not sock. Why lose raincoat? Refuse collect call from Norman Mailer. Key idea: The waves are the slaves of the motion of the ocean.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20)
Accent on confusion. You don't know what's coming off. Why can't you concentrate while reading Newsweek? You're appalled this week by metaphysical gap between past and present. You seek meaningful work. Define "meaningful." Your agitation prevents Aquarius from sleeping soundly. You need society, but does it need you? Calm down. Gaze at stars. Quit eating mayonnaise with finger. If you write parody, it may backfire. If you eat fish, chew gently. The world is a lot bigger than you; behave accordingly.

ARIES (March 21 - April 19)
Many occurrences in your life this week. Behave. People seem to change but don't really: know this and smile. Cut down on chocolate cigarettes, except when energy is at very low ebb, in which case investigate possibility of chocolate cigars as supplement. Your war-like nature could cause pugilistic encounter with well-muscled Scorpio—wear a nose-guard. Make it an attractive nose-guard, though, because Scorpio also figures on romantic horizon. Eat, eat.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)
Future is no laughing matter; wipe grin off face. Avoid china shops. Avoid Chinese restaurants unless wearing red or accompanied by Woodward or Bernstein. Refuse free trips to Asia unless you have the promised traveler's checks in hand (not mouth). Crossing streets is a good time to look both ways. Drawing mustaches on photos of grandparents

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MARK HALLIDAY has returned to New England, after a teaching stint in upstate New York. He writes poems and stories, as well as parodies.

will lead to embarrassment if continued. You look best when sober and seen from distance. Life is a river, not an ocean, so why act like *Queen Mary*? Watch for intelligent Capricorn with normal freckles—love is possible!

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)
Your life refuses to stop. Dreams come during sleep. You forget them in morning. Take this in stride. Sibling wears enormous shoes; sympathize. Someone loves your body, someone else your mind; love both. Fate plays oddball tricks—be alert, especially on Friday, and look behind you frequently. During lunch hour on Friday look behind you constantly. If sore neck develops, consult physician. On Memorial Day, remember everything, if Democrat; if Republican, try to forget. Weekend a good time for rest, relaxation. Then on Monday: back to work! So it goes.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)
Why are you wearing those white socks? They make you look twinky, like Harvey Suggles who always brought a brief-case to high school. While you're at it, reconsider all footwear, and your marriage. Time is not on your side. But why not get kicks while you can still see your feet? Go to zoo. Return home and drink. Return to zoo after midnight, laugh strange laugh, perceive latent animality in social forms. Accept collect call from great-grandmother: she knows something.

LEO (July 23 - August 22)
Accent on meaning. See beneath surfaces. When cleaning toilets, use a little elbow grease for a change. Your complexion improves; thank God. Reconsider raisin bran. If Gemini twins offer advice, make them repeat everything twice—then ignore. Think, think, think. Nobody ever promised you a peach upside-down cake. But thought will bring progress: look for $3,000 raise in near future, if employed. If unemployed, don't sweat. Think. Who will win World Series and how? Figure this out, then place bets. Sex is in your thoughts this week. If you sleep with bony individual, wear patch over left eye. Someone will adore the way you growl before cocktails. Think, think.

IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY
you are tall, thin, independently wealthy, brave, good-looking, probably American, old enough to read, too smart to waste time, interested in sex, short, plump, penurious, far-sighted, near-sighted, and faintly odorous, but basically okay. —*Mark Halliday*

ED OCHESTER

TOWARD THE SPLENDID CITY

> All paths lead to the same goal:
> to convey to others what we are.
> —*Neruda*

This is why in the wormpaths
of my solitary life
I want to grow cabbages,
with my thumb brush away
the tiny weeds, amaranth and purslane.

Do this early in the morning
before the birds are weary
or the sun bakes clay.
I remember how my grandmother
gave gifts of tomatoes and cucumbers,
picked the vegetables as the sun rose
and left them by doors
of silent houses.

If I could cultivate and water
the hearts of my children
I would do it,
my daughter strong and delicate
as fennel,
my son tough and moody as onions
upright in their solitude.

But there one works by indirection
in the strong heat of afternoons.
One hints and jokes,
loves by discussing the magnitude of suns
with a drink in one's hand,
or thudding softballs through the heavy air.

And in Pittsburgh,
where the blood of lost workers
haunts the soil beneath the pavement,
one afternoon I found beneath my office door
an anonymous note: "I love you."

Because we live this way we dream
of a whole people walking together
through their fields,
the work in common,
bodies touching,
eyes clear.

This is where one's fingers speak.
In the long rest after labor
a voice works through the fall streets
to meet its lover
beneath the white ring of ice.

FILM

Lawrence Sturhahn

Spare the Rod (POV II)

June in 1977 is the month of graduations and prophecies. From the east portico of one of the redwood-sided buildings that constitute Middle School, circa 1970, winds a column of 8th graders dressed in their finest, shepherded by the assistant principal who wears an appropriate serious face along with his Ivy League summer suit. On the drought-seared brown grass of the playing fields behind the school a platform has been erected, on top of it a lectern and a row of chairs for the dignitaries who are already seated. At either end are the large black speakers for the P.A. system, flanked on the left by the national flag, on the right by the flag of the state of California. Facing this, U-shaped, rows of folding chairs. Those on the two sides for the about-to-be-graduated are still empty; those in the center are filled with parents, brothers and sisters, a few grandmothers and grandfathers, and the lovers of those who are single parents, male and female both. In fact there are not enough chairs, so it is the wise who have brought blankets to spread out on the ground. Others stand, or mill around. Friends converse proudly, marveling at their kids' accomplishments, or bitching about being parents altogether; I wave to a man I see maybe once a year.

For this particular piece of northern California it's a hot day, seventy-five degrees (or twenty-four Celsius, if you please), the sun shining brightly. But there is also, as is usual this year, the wind. It whips the flags in front of the speakers, and blows the long hair on everybody, male and female both (although this year too, really, there is more short hair on both sexes than I can remember). From the special section between the platform and the empty chairs on the American flag side the school band plays bravely, if a little soft and uncertain, some variation of the "Colonel Bogey March" from "Bridge on the River Kwai." In its context it's appropriate; to this drumming the column approaches. Excitement and a kind of jubilation are in the air; on the sere brown hills the foliage is still green; behind the platform, gentle slopes rising against the bright blue sky, sacred to the Tamal Indians (whose land this once was), looms Mount Tamalpais. It is our landmark and (perhaps) our excuse, and along the lower ridges, west towards the sea, tendrils of fog obscure the expensive and exotic suburban houses in the trees.

* * *

Accompanied by her mother, a small friendly Texas woman who is delighted, Sissy Spacek has come to San Francisco on the p.r. tour for the selling of Robert Altman's "Three Women" (which I didn't see). They are forgathered with several members of the press (one of whom declaims he is more a *writer* than a *journalist*, to which another wonders, slightly defensively, if there's such a *big* difference). Hosted by 20th Century Fox, the affair is at a restaurant on the top floor of the St. Francis Hotel; the full plate glass windows behind the actress give access to an aerial view of the city (and elicit brief thoughts of how you got down if there was an earthquake . . . a blackout . . . some catastrophe yet unknown or unfilmed).

Sissy not only uses the words, but gives the impression of believing in "integrity," "energy," "one-ness." She talks of how "a scene takes off," and watching her mobile, almost child-like face, the listener knows exactly what she means, because it's a metaphor for what must happen when she turns on her interior motor to perform.

Dressed in something not much different or more sophisticated than many of the dresses worn by the 8th graders to graduate, her face not made-up—or so artfully made-up as to appear not made-up—clear, pale, almost transparent red-head skin, and clear, pale, direct blue eyes, she appears not many years removed from that graduation either. And yet, of course, she is, and paradoxically, along with innocence, she exudes a specific sexuality. Under that simple garb, as evidenced in several of her films, is an erotic feral woman's body.

That I have been invited to this luncheon, where the charming Sissy at the head of the table has no trouble dominating the grandeur of the background, is partly an accident. Technically I do not review films or write press releases, and the major companies—Fox, UA, Universal, Paramount—are burdened realistically with astronomical distribution costs (which include lunches for the press to pick at the stars). These costs are sometimes once again as much, or more than, the negative cost (the production: cast, crew, script, equipment rental, raw stock, editing, insurance, finishing—what it took to make the movie in the first place), so I am, as another Texan used to say, as useful to them as tits on a boar hog. From me, apparent free-loader who pays back no dues by adding to the immediate buzz (negative or positive) about the film, they don't get, so why should they pick up the check? Although it would be nice to be on top of the list of perks and junkets, in fact, of course, I do talk about films so there is consolation in being able just to say what I will (not unthoughtfully) without always being strictly objective about the rhetorics of cinema. (Are reviewers always strictly objective about the rhetorics of cinema?)

"Three Women" I did not see. But "Welcome to L.A." (produced by Robert Altman, directed by Alan Rudolph) in which Ms. Spacek (who is married to a motion picture art director by the name of Jack Fisk, and has wisely invested in a house and property in her home town of Mission, Texas) plays one of the characters, I did—and (objectively critical) did not find it appealing.

I also saw her in "Badlands," her first film, directed by Terrence Malick, released in 1974. In it she plays the half mindless girl-friend accomplice in a murder odyssey across the middle into the far west that was based on the actual odyssey of murder perpetrated by Charlie Starkweather in 1958. And she had the lead in "Katherine," a picture I admired greatly as a realistic expression of the revolutionary side of the counter culture. Directed by Jeremy Paul Kagan; I wrote something about that film in NAR, the spring issue in 1976. I also saw her as Carrie in "Carrie," which Brian De Palma directed and which I found to be a failed, abrasive movie because I could never be quite certain whether the director had his tongue in his cheek or his fingers at his nose, wiggling them at the audience. One of the verities I remember, and feel is real, is that an author should maintain a consistent point of view toward his material, or make sure the audience at least knows what his point of view is. Even if the point of view is indirect there is something concrete for the audience to sit with. "Carrie" jerked me back and forth from real satire to slapstick with its creaky plot, bathing things here and there with blood, death, and sorcery, and finally tricked my emotions at the end in response to a jack-in-the-box trick.

Finally she is in "Welcome to L.A." which is partly summed up in Sissy describing how Altman—who directed her in "Three Women" and produced for his ex-assistant director in "Welcome"—feels about movies."His attitude is that films need no explanation; they are whatever they mean to a particular individual." In other words they are plotless in the formal sense, a sequence of randomly connected incidents slightly skewed off common reality, peopled with characters who are often caricatures. (Sissy is seen as the drop-out house-cleaning lady who vacuums nude to the waist; her full breasts a shock when contrasted to that open, guileless face.)

Quite reminiscent of Altman's own work—as why should it not be, since Rudolph is his protegé—"Welcome to L.A." might be characterized as an example of the improvisational rather than the plotted, a form of film (and literature) in style during the '60s and into the early '70s. Faced by a world that appeared turned up side down and sideways, when the newspaper accounts of happenings outstripped for plot the weirdest ones a writer might invent, the answer appeared to be in presenting reality as absurd—which is what it was called in theatre. Baffled by it for some time myself, I embraced and celebrated it when I finally came to understand, and, looking back, think it worked for that time absolutely but now is an anachronism. Not that the world is more explicable, still reality is different, and my sensibility has changed. There is one value at least as you grow older; along with the subtle aches and pains, that damned pair of reading glasses, there's a perspective you acquire, a long view. It's interesting to contemplate that in the past thirty years I have seen reality with three different points of view, each (hopefully) finally appropriate to its time, and all quite following the dictates of Hegel's dialectic.

Alan Rudolph's picture doesn't for me either comment on, explicate, or illuminate what my correlatives for reality are today. Its vision is as skewed as that of "Carrie." But in all that I have seen of Sissy Spacek (and behind the opening titles of "Carrie" that's a lot) she transcends her material; she is consummate in what she does.

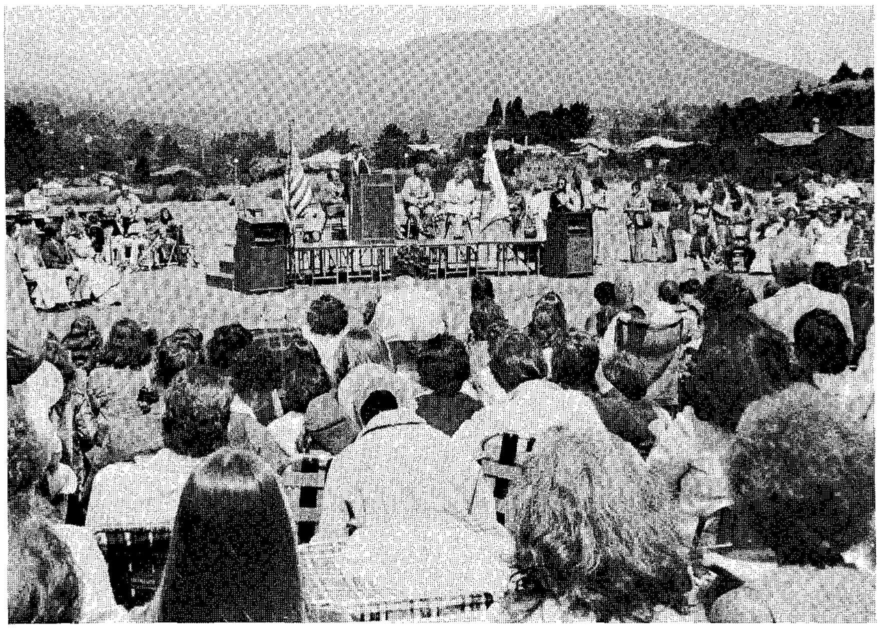
Listening to her at lunch I am struck with the enthusiasm in her voice, the energy and curiosity reminiscent of an interested and charming child (a quality I would like to have the facility of tapping when the sky is low and when, as Fitzgerald said, "In the dark night of the soul it's always 3 o'clock in the morning").

She talked of being a writer, of "seeing the angle," and how a knowledge of the technical side of film making really helps an actor. "Finding out what everybody's vision is so your own can be within it. Someone can be great, but if you can't make a connection with them . . . phewwttt! Story," she said, "is important, but if you don't have that connection no story—no matter how great it is—is going to have life." She said it's a matter of being able with another to create a life force and reality, and wondered if that isn't the creative basis of life? "When artists meet is not just what I bring and what you bring, not just this actor, director, designer . . . but I want to get caught in the art."

Middle School was planned and built in those days when *relevance* (as opposed to regimentation) was the cry in education—mind you, that's barely a decade ago. In those days the options were unlimited, the emphasis was on the individual and self-realization. Classrooms, some said, should be open, the students, from kindergarten to college, encouraged to find and concentrate on their own interests, celebrate their own creativity. Teachers were friends and advisors, not disciplinarians and martinets. First names were in vogue. Rows of student desks were displaced in favor of work spaces in the classroom, this corner for history, that for crafts, over there for reading. The teacher roved freely from individual to individual offering one-to-one relationships, and the students roved in their turn from the History of Western Civilization to Huck Finn to the terrarium in which rabbits reproduced.

Even in those halcyon days the open classroom had its violent opposition. Parents asked in frustration how they were to measure their children's *achievement* (their *own* achievement?) when they were no longer being graded? They stood up at PTA meetings and spoke darkly of the workings of the devil, the corruption of psychedelic (and worse) drugs, a conspiracy of communists. Puritans to the core, they shouted for the three Rs, that sparing the rod spoiled the child, and then they went home to watch "All In the Family" on television. "Spoiling indeed," the other side cried out in their turn, "children need a little spoiling in order to be whole!"

I don't know that the final count is tallied yet, but in these days the back-



to-basics people, allied with economic and emotional hard times and a diminishing school population, seem to be winning, it only by default. Middle School, which used to point with pride to its four modulated sub-schools with walls that could be moved and no doors to the classrooms, seems to be obsolete. Rising costs and fewer students have caught it in a terrible bind; next year fewer elective and enrichment classes will be offered; they're closing up part of the school. The movable walls and open doors are monuments to another time.

(A recent study by the U.S. Office of Education indicates that students in open classroom projects ranked in the bottom third, but the study was compiled around and focused on the disadvantaged and the poor. With that severe limitation the systems that achieved significant pupil performance are a little frightening to contemplate, left nothing for improvisation. Lesson plans are read word for word; the students learn by chanting rote responses!)

* * *

In *Newsweek* recently Robert DeNiro was characterized as the quintessential actor, a man capable of playing any role (and being "hot" he's played quite a few, from the psychotic taxi driver to Jimmy Doyle, jazz sax-person in "New York, New York"). Liza Minnelli is Judy Garland's daughter and, according to some reports, more like her as well as better and better every picture. The two of them are directed by Martin Scorsese (whose genre seems to be New York: "Mean Streets," the aforementioned "Taxi Driver") in a story about a musician and a singer who meet on V-J Day in the Starlight Ballroom. After some contretemps illuminated by a heavy burlesque pick-up sequence (which is the *long* opening of the film), in a caricature of a courtship they become lovers, husband and wife, father and mother, after which their paths, both emotionally and creatively, diverge. The film has a lot of good music in it, show numbers and jazz both; it is said to be a revival of what was once a staple of the American industry, a *musical*. Along with that nostalgic look back at a past genre, this time it's also infused, however, with a modern sensibility where things don't end necessarily or generally with moonlight and roses, either in film or life.

"N.Y. (2)"—as *Variety* titles it—had the potential (and it seems in quick memory to be a rare one) of an interesting plot, a good story. Creative aspiration, craftsmanship, the attack on success in the music business, the bumpy road to making it, the one-night stands, loneliness, and the gratification of finally doing it, the disparity of jealousy, the responsibility of a child, a performer's ego—these are, in fact, the twists of real life and the meat of good films. But here something has gone wrong, and toward the end of what has become, unfortunately, just an overlong movie, when he goes to see her smash opening at the Starlight Ballroom (again) I thought thankfully that the picture had to be soon over, and so it proved to be. And walking out with the preview audience, which tends always to inscrutability, I began to assess my reactions.

A number of times in the course of the film I had been annoyed by what seemed to be totally inappropriate human-being responses on the part of the characters. Smashing performances indeed, but why and for what motivation? I found myself automatically rejecting them as too extreme, and this called up my memory of "Taxi Driver" (the same actor and director), which I found unbelievable, too. And that brought up the question of the director's point of view to the material, to the reality of the story and the reality of people who inhabit, are the flesh of, the story. Isn't it the director's responsibility to control the highs and lows of perfor-

mance, so DeNiro's instrument—tuned and powerful as it is—is not a problem because it's out of control?

After the question of whose vision it is that results in the final film—actor, director, writer, editor (those long and interesting abstract discussions about the *auteur*), it *is* the director's prerogative to control the actor's performance. Unless, of course, the stature of the actor dominates that of the director (if you cast Marlon Brando don't you have to cast Francis Coppola to stand up to him?). Is that the problem here?

And after the question in "N.Y.(2)" of an unevenness in the film that appears to arise from its being too long and being cut (because exhibitors don't like long pictures which interrupt the audience habit patterns of a 6 - 8 - 10 o'clock show time) rather awkwardly, leaving things dangling here and there, there are two things about Hollywood (out of a hundred): its adulation of youth (isn't it amazing that so-and-so made the such-and-such epic when he was only 20 years old!) and the space.

"Welcome to L.A." is not a movie about the movie business, though, perhaps, the title might suggest that. It is supposedly a picture about people who happen to live in Los Angeles, but a Los Angeles as space and metaphor for a condition which, I think, the director has fashioned as a point of view on the reality of the United States. The strange disparate people who inhabit this strange antic world are symbols rather than people, just as it is not a real place. So the audience is presented with a didactic message in order that they may examine themselves.

In a column I wrote called "In Belvedere" (NAR, Summer 1975), the director Donald Wrye said: "Things are being done by people who don't go into real life any more—if they ever did. Some of them are young so they haven't any experience. What they've had is the ability to function in media . . . these are people who have the chance to make films, are good at the mechanics of making films, even at the *shtick* of making films, but who have limited life experience and, thus, don't have anything to say. And, thus, however bright and skillful the films may be, they're not about anything."

To people who have no experience with making films it is hard to describe the state of mind that surrounds their making. A cameraman I once knew said, "Where else can I make this kind of money except with a machine gun?" But money, even astronomical sums of money, is only part of it. Also there are the egos; and the illusion of living in some kind of special world where the making of a movie is more important than anything but God (who sometimes comes second, too). Besides that there is per diem, rich food, and there are supposed to be women (or men) sexy as Farrah Fawcett-Majors (or Burt Reynolds) and willing as minks. (Are minks willing?) Then most everybody is driven by consuming ambition and is attempting to be one up: before you can cut my throat I'll cut yours! And if you're not on location shooting, you're in Hollywood waiting for the studio to call. And very little of this has anything to do with real people living in the real world. The concern is toward technique ("shtick") and being super-charged, and making pictures to stun other picture makers. Ah yes, Hollywood!

And the audience in the theatre? Given that statistical evidence that they are between the ages of 18 and 28, they'll go along because what do they know either?

* * *

" 'What happens next?' is a perfectly respectable question to ask in the course of any fiction, but in wanting to know what happens next, we also want to know why and to whom? The whys and to-whoms are getting short shrift in today's films. We aren't being asked to think, only to experience fear, which is not only one of the least exalting of emotions but also one of the easiest to communicate in films. A film like 'Black Sunday' is not easy to make. A lot of money and technical skill went into its production but for all that, the only thing it does is kill time. Is it too much to expect that movies do something more?"

The question Vincent Canby asks (in a weekly column on film for the Sunday New York *Times)* is a knotty one for me. It was in April he wrote that about "Black Sunday," which he found to be an implausible and empty—though technically excellent—film, a judgment with which I agree. So now what about George Lucas' "Star Wars" which opened at the end of May, and by the middle of August had grossed 100 million? That's doing it better and quicker than "Jaws," "Rocky," and anything else you might want to mention.

Jack Kroll in *Newsweek* starts his review: "I loved 'Star Wars' and so will you . . . the rarest kind of movie—it's pure sweet fun all the way." Roger Simon in the Chicago *Sun-Times:* "The movie is about . . . well, that's sort of a problem. The movie is so simple that it sounds embarrassing in print." *Variety's* review opens: " 'Star Wars' is a magnificent film."

Hmmm . . . undoubtedly, all this and more; I have yet to find a negative comment. From the opening banger a story is off and running, good guys and bad guys, intergalactic conspiracies, ray guns, swords-of-light wielded by charming old knights, space ships, death stars, futuristic fascists, dog fights, a perky princess clean and sexless as your sister. See the animal-like creatures, humanoids, and robots who are more psychologically complex and cute than the human characters. They tend to be flat and stereotyped, handsome, heroic or demonic, easy for an audience (of children) to identify with and admire, or hate and hiss at. Lord Darth Vader wears a black suit and mask and helmet; he's a fallen knight, and the name is probably an anagram. Finally, as either a sop to or a celebration of the modern search for *the* existential truth: *the force be with you* is something the good guys say. If you can get with the "force," you can put the 8-ball in the side pocket every shot. Which, if it's slightly ambiguous, is what Luke Starwalker does in the spectacular special effects ending, bringing about the immediate triumph of good over evil, and leaving room for a sequel.

Writers quote Lucas as saying he grew up with Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers and these fantasies sustained his mundane boyhood, that what he sought to do was make a new Flash Gordon for the modern world. Lucas says that "Star Wars" is essentially a film for children, kids of all ages. In fact he has succeeded without question, and left very little for the imagination of an adult mind. Shouldn't we expect something more?

Comparable only in my memory to Stanley Kubrick's "2001—A Space Odyssey," here there are no ambiguous slabs, or final strange disturbing images of a baby in a rococo white room to confound the audience. "Star Wars" is a comic strip that cost 10 million to produce. Like a comic strip, flat and linear, it appeals to the "child in all of us." And it is the child in all of us that seeks escape in these troubled times of diminished opportunity, but the question Canby asked which I muse about, excellent and meticulous as the film is, shouldn't it do more than just kill a little time? I mean for that kind of money . . . What about something for the adult in all of us adults? Or even the potential adult in our sometimes troubled children?

* * *

How variegated the costumes on the 8th graders are. As they file out past the proud parents and begin to fill in the rows of empty seats on either side of the platform, long dresses are what most of the girls wear, white or pink or pale blue. Floppy broad-brimmed hats they have to hold against the wind, and fringed shawls are definitely in style. Some have trouble with the platform soles and high heels, catching their hems or stumbling a little on the stairs. With the boys, suits, a tuxedo here and there. There's one in brilliant day-glo blue, and his top-hat he has a bad time holding, with his cane under his arm while he does that ritual of shaking hands with his right and receiving his diploma in the left. On many the pants are too short, and the thin ankles and big shoes hang out at the bottom. And of both sexes some are mature already: the perky breasts under the dresses, the shapely shoulders, the graceful way they walk. And then there are the others in the in-between stage, still unformed, their bodies blurred with baby fat.

There has been a lot of talk this year about discipline problems. The Safeway up the street has turned itself into a fortress to discourage kids coming in at

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—Joe David Bellamy
Harper's Bookletter

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lunch time to rip it off. There has been talk about dope too, even 6th and 7th graders smoking it. And sex—the self-help section in the Sunday paper advises that eleven or twelve is not too young to counsel children about promiscuous activity. The statistics about pregnancy and sexuality are very disturbing. If the national statistic is 35% of girls 15-19 years of age who have participated in intercourse, some say it's 60% in California. But these are 8th graders, 12 and 13, sitting there, just about to have their first real graduation.

They should have had a microphone for the band; its tentative sounds the wind whips away. You can hear the wind roar in the loudspeakers too, as the ceremony starts. Not being movie people they don't know the trick of wrapping the microphone with a handkerchief or covering it with foam rubber. This year they are honoring a teacher who's retiring after twenty-odd years. A student gets up to read a poem; a gift is presented; finally the lady herself stands, bulky, self-assured, grandmotherly, and warm. She was an English teacher; she mentions having her class read books; she has wit.

My memory of teachers retiring is nostalgic; time passes and we grow old; recently a professor I liked very much died. My memory of graduation ceremonies is full of words about hope in the future, how with sticktoitiveness and a moral point of view the world was just an oyster ready to be opened. But that was last year—or maybe years ago. Now the words concern diminished opportunities and narrowed focus; ERA is having a hard time; we are using too much gas; how many jobs were there for English majors this year; where could a young teacher even find a job teaching? It is a different world these 8th graders face, when things aren't going to get easier but harder, in which it appears possible there might not even be any more healing, nurturing rain. In the Chicago *Sun-Times* Roger Simon also said: "So maybe the '70s are over and the first movie of the '80s has begun." "Star Wars" he is talking about; I wonder if that's good or bad.

Now the superintendent of the district begins to read the endless list of names; the rows of 8th graders rise and move, one by one, to the platform and the podium behind which he stands. The parents rush forward and squat with cameras on the dry brown grass to freeze a moment in time. Now they are graduating, moving forward in life. Armageddon comes and one of them is my daughter. May the *force* be with her! ☐

Brief Poetry Notices

Land Diving, by Robert Morgan. Louisiana State. $3.95 (paper)

☆ ☆

An academic with a propensity for "poetic" words, Morgan writes on a variety of trivial subjects. It is true, of course, that it is trivia which sometimes means most in all our lives, though the poems here rarely touch marrow. His third book.

Ludi Jr, by William Kloefkorn. Pentagram. $3.00 (paper)

☆ ☆

One of those scarcely sufferable books which pretend to coherence by seeing everything through the invented eyes of a single persona. Doesn't work well here—chiefly because the poems are prosy and a bit pompous, and (sigh) cutesy.

The Elements of San Joaquin, by Gary Soto. Pittsburgh. $2.95

☆ ☆ ☆ ⯨

A fine and playful book, worth having not because its author is Chicano (the publisher seems to consider that paramount) but because the poems are straight, direct, truthful. In short, a pleasure. Winner of the 1976 United States Award of the International Poetry Forum.

Millions of Strange Shadows, by Anthony Hecht. Atheneum. $7.95

☆ ☆ ⯨

Hecht, of course, is too well-educated for our own good, and these poems shudder with juxtapositions of the banal and the erudite. The result is a poetry that is distressingly out-of-date—as if it were no longer possible to have fun with satire, with irony, with all the old-fashioned textbook devices of the poem.

With Ignorance, by C. K. Williams. Houghton Mifflin. $7.95

☆ ☆ ☆

Except for the title poem, the book is comprised of prose narratives—superb prose narratives—couched in long, nicely paced, quasi-poetic lines across a wide page. The title piece is an embarrassment.

Poems about Silence, by Edward Butscher. Seabury. $7.95.

☆

A canzone, a villanelle for Ezra Pound, projectivist meanderings and a series of contrived poems professedly about silence swell this volume by the biographer of Sylvia Plath. To be the biographer of a controversial poet is not to be a poet.

Trinity, by Harry Smith. Horizon. $6.95.

☆

Hardhat Day 1970, when workers from the World Trade Center construction site attacked a peace march in downtown Manhattan, is the matrix of this sprawling poem in the tradition of the *Cantos* or *Song of Myself*. Smith's causes are still relevant in our quiescent times, but his imagination has not mythologized the materials, so what we read is all too often *reportage*, not poetry.

Dangers, by Heather McHugh. Houghton Mifflin. $6.95; $4.50 (paper)

☆ ☆

Painfully clever lines—puns, dislocations, literary pretenses—revolving around a central imagery based on ophthalmological catalogues, perhaps. Third in this publisher's hot-and-cold New Poetry Series

The Uncollected Early Poems of Gary Snyder

Between January, 1950, and May, 1951, as he finished the four years he spent studying anthropology and literature at Reed College, Gary Snyder had ten poems published there. These early poems show that from the start, he agreed with Robert Graves' book *The White Goddess,* published in 1948: our patriarchal industrial society destroys the emotional and the material sources of life. To regain the power poetry once had, poets must rediscover the ancient rituals that reënact its one universal subject, the seasonal cycles of life and death. Thirty years earlier, Robinson Jeffers had decided to do so by writing tragedies, but Snyder did so as a latter-day Imagist, by using much briefer metaphors and allusions to the myths that personify such cycles.

Nine of these early poems appear in *Janus,* Reed's mimeographed literary magazine in 1950-54. In its first issue, in January, 1950, Snyder had

a poem

walking lonely on a fall day
in a long meadow, slanting open to the woods
where the frost chilled
the dead grass, a year ago

peer sharply through the brown grass:
the slim thin white thing rotted
long ago

build now a squat stone tablet
for ants to sun on
and hide it in the dead grass:
"Here lie My Children."

Like a riddle, this describes its subject without naming it. That subject, a used condom, makes this lament for his unconceived children a parody of imagist lyrics, of love songs that regret that what might have happened didn't, and of poems that use landscapes or weather as objective correlatives of subjective reactions even as it uses imagistically minute and particularly concrete details as such correlatives to make an interestingly complex and serious point—the losses love can cause, himself as prudently unheroic and thus deserving only a modestly small and hidden monument, useful only to local ants, his culture or situation as destroying the possibilities of life to keep him free—and after such an ignominious fall, what winter follows?

In the second issue of *Janus,* in February, 1950, another poem blankly titled *a poem* appeared—another geography of an emotion, his reaction to his loss of love as a waste land in which the wind erodes the speaker's bones, as if he felt dead already. As Snyder wrote while giving his permission for their publication,

> these poems, I guess, show that I (and all of us) read Pound and Eliot. Plus the Mother Consciousness first stirred up by Robert Graves.

"All of us" included Philip Whalen, William Dickey, Lew Welch. Notice how Snyder repeats his correlatives—*dead grass* in the first poem, and *stony places* here:

a poem

Her life blew through my body and away
I see it whirling now, across the stony places.

I lost her softly through my fingers.
Between my ribs in gentle gusts she
Sifted free, polishing the small bones.

The mute, thin framework takes the winds
That blow across the stony places.

The way the last four words repeat the end of the second line ties the poem into a stable knot, a pattern self-completing because self-reflecting, perhaps in part because they suggest the speaker has nothing left he could say now.

The next two poems appeared together in the November, 1950, issue of *Janus* (II, ii; the pages remained unnumbered). By then, Snyder had at least begun to think about his Reed B.A. thesis, *The Dimensions of a Myth,* finished the following May. It argues that an allusion to a myth we know may communicate much more than a longer but abstractly prosaic narrative, a point he proves by interpreting a myth we may not know, from the Haidi of the Queen Charlotte Islands, in nine ways. Apparently Snyder agreed with Graves' definition of myths as complexly meaningful "verbal iconographs," and felt they give a reassuring if often ironically complicated meaning to an otherwise nightmarishly chaotic world. Both poems exemplify such a use of myths:

The Death of Rhea

"Behold, behold!" the Bowman said
With a fearful falling cry
While the man in black
With his blue jowls slack
Like a fluttering moth came wheeling back
From the pitiless velvet sky.

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An Autumn Poem

This distraught season
Sunlight shivers on the grass
Like a pale genius in his bathrobe
Barefoot, wavering up the stairs.

All the lovely vicious women
Seeking Orpheus through the halls,
The poet cowering in the Men's Room:
A dead leaf, withered.

See his veins,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

We may read *An Autumn Poem* as a parody of Pound's *Pan is Dead*—Pan, the other godlike poet and musician of Greek mythology—which improves upon its original by doing what Pound often only advocated, making the language idiomatically terse, concrete, and new. We may also read *An Autumn Poem* as a reminder that tragic heroes can still become the victims of their success, and followers, as Orpheus did, torn to bloody shreds (which makes "veins" a grim pun) and possibly as Jesus did, as Snyder's allusion to Luke 23:28 suggests:

> But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

Weep because with his death, a new religion will suppress the older faith, divesting our mother earth of her divinity as brutal patriarchies replace the matriarchy that had supported us? Apparently; Snyder seems to have had in mind this account of the death of Dionysus in *The White Goddess:*

> Orpheus . . . who lived 'among the savage Cauconians' close to Oenopian's home, was a sacred victim of her fury. He was torn in pieces by a pack of delirious women who chewed ivy as an intoxicant . . . Eratostheses of Alexandria, quoting Aeschylus' *Bassarides,* records that Orpheus refused to conform to the local religion but 'believed the sun, whom he named Apollo, to be the greatest of the gods . . . he ascended before dawn to the mountain called Pangaaum that he might see the sun first. At which Dionysus, *being enraged, sent him against the* Bassarides, *who tore* him in pieces . . .' That is a dishonest way of telling the story. Proclus in his commentary on Plato is more to the point: 'Orpheus, because he was the leader in the Dionysian rites, is said to have suffered the same fate as the god . . .'
>
> (page 98 of the third edition [London: Faber & Faber, 1952])

Graves prefers the second version because he believes that Orpheus, like all true poets, worships the goddess and not the abstractly intellectual Apollo. When male gods associated with the sun and heaven replaced such manifestations of the white goddess as the earth mother Rhea, 'the great mother' Cybele, and Ops, the Roman goddess of the harvest celebrated on August twenty-eighth, the blight began, or so Graves and Snyder believe; hence Snyder's often-quoted comment that he believes in the most archiac values, those of the late stone ages. We may read Greek tragedies as recording the patriarchal culture's offenses against the earth and women—for example, the murders of Iphigenia and Clytemnestra, the violations of Cassandra and Jocasta, the suppression of Antigone, the exile of Medea, the grief of the Trojan women. As we grow up, we may recapitulate this evolution of cultures, as we find patriarchal authority replacing maternal support. In *The Death of Rhea,* the Bowman tells us what to see, and may seem Apollo, the god of archery and one of the mostly male Olympian gods replacing the earlier religion. The man in black may seem a Christian priest, and the "pitiless velvet sky" a reminder of how suddenly darker the world can seem, as shades of prison cells begin to grow in upon growing boys, as they grow towards death. Graves ends *The White Goddess* by advocating her return, and as recently as *The Way West, Underground,* in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Turtle Island* in 1975, Snyder predicts and seems to want the reappearances of "elder wilder goddesses," Rhea included, as the survivors of our present culture return to tribal life and the earlier religion, and the planet begins to recover from our ecological excesses.

In other words, all things change, and circle, and old lives must end to let the new begin, which calls for sacrifices. In *Janus,* II, 3 for February, 1951, Snyder's

Tell me if I am not glad

The painful accumulation of our errors
In the dry summers, and her loneliness
And that distracted weeping
Of hot endless afternoons
Foretold the famine.

Her swimming fondness
Stetched taut in sterile time
Contracted into dusty fractions
And now the crops are failing:

Since my sorcery has failed,
My blood must feed the soil:
Let no delirious priest proclaim
A second coming; these fragments
        will stay scattered.

lets us hear an apparently male speaker foretell his death as a scapegoat, a victim of his failure to please the goddess, which *leads to a dry summer in which the harvest fails, but his bones* and blood may fertilize future crops—his only possible rebirth, and thus a skeptical comment on the Christian reinterpretation of Easter, a holiday it borrowed from the earlier religion.

The same issue includes a more personal poem, in which Snyder both parodies Pound's *Mauberley* (in which Pound came close to writing his own epitaph as a poet made a scapegoat by what "the age demanded") and Pound's *Epitaphs* in *Lustra,* and also teased a fellow poet, his classmate Phillip Whalen, then turning to Oriental cultures as Snyder did, and as Pound had forty years earlier:

A Sinecure for P. Whalen

Whalen, curious vulture,
Picked the western mind,
And ate the cataracted eyes
That once saw Gwion race the hag
And addle gentlemen

Still unfulfilled, he skittered to
The sweet bamboo
Fed green on yellow silt
And built a poem to dead Li Po.
The Drunkard taught him how to dance,
Leave dead bodies to the plants,
And sleep out nights in the rain.

Pound's *Epitaphs* celebrate two drunkards, Fu I who "loved the high cloud and the hill" but "died of alcohol," and the poet Li Po, who died trying "to embrace a moon in the Yellow River." Scapegoats may leave their bodies to fertilize the crops, an ecologically needed recycling, and Whalen and Snyder may have known by then that they would need to know how to "sleep out nights in the rain" in the nomadic life Snyder's later poems describe.

Snyder also looked satirically at another westerner encountering the east in this poem, printed by another student in Reed's graphic arts workshop, but not distributed:

Escaping Cambridge,
He turned away from London
With austere passion faced the seas

Accompanied by numbered boxes
Crossed the plains in teeming summer
Soft eyes avoiding sores and hunger

Stood sorrowful in cool Darjeeling:
Above the tea-bush Kanchenjunga falls unfurled
Placenta of the soil created
Strewn beyond Cathay

Through rank valleys, thirsty plains
Rising early—frost chilling sandalled feet—
Sleepy men muttering in an unknown tongue
Pack loaded, far from villages
So he could venture

Indus, Brahmaputra, silver shreds at glacier snout
Wheels of fluttering paper creaking turn

He fell beyond the mists of Chomolungma
Where even nomads shun to die
        Who is to say that demons did not kill him
Far from Tea and Cambridge?

Like *The Waste Land,* this hints at a quest it leaves unexplained. George Leigh-Mallory left Cambridge to climb Chomolungma, Mount Everest; possibly Snyder wrote this poem as an epic condensed to a few vivid moments by leaving out the connecting links and explanations the official account, E. F. Norton's *The Fight for Everest: 1924,* includes. It mentions their provisions packed in numbered boxes (so the climbers would know what to open each day), and crossing the plains of India to Darjeeling, famous for its tea, cooler climate, and its view of Everest and Kanchenjunga, the planet's highest and third highest mountains. The porters wore sandals even across snow fields, and spoke a language unknown to the British. Creaking prayer wheels turned by the wind were seen as high as the snouts of the glaciers from which the Indus and Brahmaputra Rivers start, and then Mallory and Andrew Irvine were last seen only eight hundred feet below the summit, higher than anyone had climbed before, and then the clouds hid them again, forever. We do not know whether they reached the summit before they fell or froze; they vanished, victims of their own ambition, and here Snyder came closest to writing a tragedy, perhaps because of his own interest in mountaineering at the time; page E-1 of the May 18, 1975 Portland *Sunday Oregonian* includes a portrait of the artist as a young climber, and he has climbed several of the icecapped volcanoes of the Cascades.

The next three poems appeared as a group, *Three Mantic Poems* by 'Gareth Snyder' in *Janus,* II, 4, pages 3-5, in May, 1951; these anticipate his later conversion to Buddhism. The first refers to the Theravada Buddhism of Ceylon, Thailand, and Burma, Snyder told me, and may explain why some become ascetics:

I : Kasina Song

Dallying in pleasant verdure
One warm Monday afternoon
Forming circles in the sand
With wet red clay, you cried
"Insatiable are the lusts!"
A vision then appeared.

So I departed, bowl in hand
To live in this transcendent land.

The second represents an earth mother goddess' curse:

II. ". . . still, she reproached all lands,
calling them ungrateful, and unworthy
of the gift of corn . . ."

I shall not be mollified
Until men go mad, and trees have died
For no known reason on the heights
And cornfields withered overnight;
Till Elk have groaned with causeless thirst
And flower buds refused to burst
Till rivers turn the fish to stone
And rocks are heard again to moan—
Until the sun has been retied
To Machu Picchu, men who die
Will be but corpses dressed in frocks
Who cannot speak to birds or rocks

This may seem 'mere fantasy,' or the belief in magic characteristic of 'primitive' tribes, but not of our sophisticated and skeptical society, and yet we have begun to know again, as Snyder suggested in the interview of him in the *California*

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Quarterly for spring, 1975, that whether we personify it as a goddess or not, we need to treat the planet with respect, and know the limits of its toleration of us, and what will happen to it and us if we exceed them. In many ways, we have already; as C.P. Snow predicted a decade ago, we can now watch the starving die on television.

The third *Mantic Song* answers the question its title asks:

III. "Is there a sound in the forest of pard or bassarid?"

I gnaw the body of delight
Spit the knotted gristle out
Lap the blood left by night.

O see your joy digested here:
Splintered to the bone of life
That tortures with its fractured point
Your concupiscence into strife,
Your love into a ball of hair
That cuts me worse than any knife!

Here Snyder's persona has a pard (a panther or leopard) or bassarid (a follower of Dionysus) prove it exists by describing what it does, and suffers: eat animals, possibly including us, and suffer from the scratchy broken bones and indigestible hair. This transubstantiation seems not mere metaphor or ritual, but a fact everywhere in a world where every life feeds on others, season after season. The body we delight in may soon delight whatever eats us, but in this grimly comic poem the predator complains about the troubles it has digesting us, including whatever gave us love or lust or joy. We result from such emotions—again, the protean forms of life and death, and their cyclic changes as the subject of poetry, seen in a way we probably had not expected yet cannot deny, the discoveries poems exist to provoke. —*Robert Ian Scott*

A Do-it-Yourself Kurt Vonnegut Anthology

First you must pretend it is, say, 1955. You're about to buy a fresh weekly issue of that venerable fifties institution, the *Saturday Evening Post*. And you're looking for a new story by the *Post's* perennial writer, Kurt Vonnegut. Here, in the fifties tradition of do-it-yourself, are instructions for an entire book of undiscovered Kurt Vonnegut stories, never collected except in this homemade work you can assemble for yourself.

From 1949 to 1966 Vonnegut wrote over fifty stories for the *Post*, *Collier's*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and other slick magazines then in their heyday. He sold these stories, he says, "to finance the writing of the novels"—*Cat's Cradle*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and the others—which until 1969 were spectacularly unbought and not often read.

They are widely read now. Vonnegut's novels sell over a million copies each year; and so with the need to sell them removed, his popular stories of the fifties have become a lost art. For his fans old enough to have been reading back then, Delacorte published a small selection of them, *Welcome to the Monkey House*, in 1968, which his younger readers also grabbed up. But if you really love the vintage Vonnegut, once is not enough, so here are directions for putting together your own new volume of Kurt Vonnegut stories.

Go to your nearest library. Even the smallest branch is likely to keep the popular magazines Vonnegut wrote for, and they all have Xerox machines for making copies. Copyright legislation makes it legal for you to request single copies of items, so take along a roll of dimes.

Begin with "Thanasphere" (*Collier's*, September 2, 1950), one of the first stories Vonnegut wrote after quitting his job as public-relations man for the General Electric Research Lab ("Progress Is Our Most Important Product"). You can tell what he'd been writing about for the last few years, since "Thanasphere" is set in the progressive future, measuring the effect of rocket travel on America's "first" astronaut. But the protagonist, Major Allen Rice, looks more like a Sabre-jet ace from the Korean War, and throughout the story Vonnegut's emphasis is on the here-and-now quite familiar to his middle-class readers. Rice has been sent up two thousand miles through the ionosphere. "With a telescope, he could pick out small towns and the wakes of ships without much trouble. It would be breathtaking to watch the enormous blue and green ball; to see night creeping around it, and clouds and storms growing and swirling over its face."

Heady stuff for 1950, and even today a more vivid account than some of our own astronauts have given us. But Vonnegut has a surprisingly sentimental story to tell: Major Rice is in a thanasphere, to which voices of the dead come like radio waves. He meets deceased husbands and wives, unavenged homicide victims, and even a cloying grandmother and a beckoning lover. Strange material to be mixed up with the exotic hardware of outer space. It's the first mark of Vonnegut's later method—combining middle-class themes with a science-fiction setting. But even in this embryonic setting, Vonnegut moves on to a more sophisticated technique. Rice's spirits tell him embarrassing truths about affairs on Earth, and of course his military superiors worry for the mission. But the chief scientist has a deeper worry. How would future space travelers survive, having to listen to such a gaggle of communication? "Every bum and genius, criminal and hero, average man and madman, now and forever a part of humanity—advising, squabbling, conniving, placating. . . . " In the unlikely context of a science-fiction thriller, Vonnegut has added his own touch of ironic humor.

After this, you might turn to "Any Reasonable Offer," from *Collier's* of January 19, 1952. Here Vonnegut presents broader comedy, and shows how his fantasy schemes could be expressed directly through the most middle-class American realities—in this case, the story of a rich-looking couple who spend their vacations being wined and dined by real estate agents who hope to sell them extravagant mansions. When the two weeks are up, the husband returns to his low-salaried job, the wife to her dirty diapers at home.

Whether rocket ships in space or strike-it-rich dreams in your own back

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From the book Vonnegut in America, *a Seymour Lawrence book, to be published by Delacorte Press and, in paper, by Delta (Dell).*

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yard, Vonnegut's stories charted a profitable route through the formula of slick magazines everywhere: fantasy. In 1947, for the University of Chicago's Anthropology Department, Vonnegut had written a master's thesis entitled "Fluctuations Between Good and Evil in Simple Tales." The idea was, as he tells it, "that the shape of stories was ultimately an important clue to how societies act." For two years he took *New Yorker* stories, fiction from abroad, Kentucky ballads, folk tales, American-Indian narratives—"I got a bunch of these stories and I graphed them," Vonnegut says. And, sure enough, each type of story had its own identifiable form. But the thesis was rejected. Did Vonnegut adopt any of these formulas when he had to write for the slicks himself? "Oh, no," he objects. "It turns out that I did, but I didn't know it." Looking back now, he sees the patterns, which are for us a ready-made structure for our do-it-yourself anthology.

Look up "Unpaid Consultant," in *Cosmopolitan*, March 1955. Here we meet a typical Vonnegut narrator, in this case a contact man for an investment-counseling firm. In other stories this figure sells aluminum siding and storm windows, and sometimes runs a Pontiac agency (as he will in the novel *Breakfast of Champions*), but here he is visiting clients of another class: the rich. His advice is less often financial than the counsel of homely, middle-class value. As an "unpaid consultant" he studies the portfolio of Celeste Divine, an old high school girlfriend who is now a TV starlet. She is torridly unhappy because her career has dwarfed the achievement of her husband, an auto mechanic. Vonnegut's solution is to have the husband become an expert, knowing everything there is to know about one thing: catsup. "Harry's found himself," she raves. "Isn't it marvelous?"

Romance is one way to champion the common values of simple folk, and in "Custom-Made Bride" (*Post*, March 27, 1954) Vonnegut's spokesman, again an investments contact man, subverts the values of the richer classes. This time his client is a designer of flashy sports cars, "Di-Modular" beds, and atomic-age kitchens. He's also designed a new wife, dimodular and all-electric herself, but terribly unhappy in the flesh and blood beneath. The designer would have composed his life "like that Finnish carafe over there, clean, harmonious, alive with the cool, tart passion of reason in our time." Vonnegut argues that human beings cannot fit such specifications—the thesis of *Player Piano*, and a familiar theme in his later novels as well.

The fifties, remember, are the years of the Great Corporation, bringing us Buick Roadmasters and all-electric homes, and an efficiency-conscious, technocratic society in which to enjoy them. As Vonnegut tested ideas of progress for General Electric in the forties, the fifties would give him ample time to project these ideas into common American life and consider their implications. "Poor Little Rich Town" (*Collier's*, October 25, 1952) is the site for a technological revolution such as the times considered possible. A new corporation is moving upstate, where a sleepy little town must be prepped by an efficiency expert rich in "know-how." With great heartlessness he crushes all the town's customs and its quietly happy way of life, until the people mount a counterrevolution to throw him and his corporation out. Two years before, Vonnegut had left Schenectady, thriving home of the General Electric Corporation, for just such an unspoiled village: West Barnstable on Cape Cod. He would certainly agree with his character's statement "What is a village profited, if it shall gain a real estate boom and lose its own soul?"

Time after time Vonnegut teases us with fantasy and then congratulates us for our good sense—and for what we really can't have anyway. A young kid, who can't afford it, burns up an expensive sports car in "The Powder Blue Dragon" (*Cosmopolitan*, November 1954), trying to impress a rich and unimpressible girl. "A Night for Love" (*Post*, November 23, 1957) finds a woman much happier with a poor boy than she would have been married to the richest man in town (their respective children are now dating). Two stories, "Bagombo Snuff Box" (*Cosmopolitan*, October 1954) and "The Package" (*Collier's*, July 26, 1952), treat the same situation: An old friend visits other old friends, the one humble and sincere, the others fabulously wealthy and successful. We know who's the happiest.

That such quaintly moral contrivances can become interesting and even funny in a short story is the mark of Vonnegut's genius. It shows up in his novels as an example of the talent which got him out of the magazine business. "Hal Irwin's Magic Lamp," featured in the June 1957 *Cosmopolitan*, is one of Vonnegut's best. In this story the hero, "a customer's man in a brokerage house" (the contrivance Vonnegut often used to bring the modest middle class in contact with the rich), has some luck in the market and strikes it rich himself. But he keeps it a secret from his wife. On the sly he fills the closets with every imaginable thing she's ever wanted, then hires a live-in cook and maid to surprise his wife with a genie's lamp, ready to grant her every wish. The climax is a dream mansion across town, where both husband and wife find themselves unhappy. "I wish," says the wife, "the lamp would take the house and everything else, if only it'll give me back the husband I thought I had." *Hey presto:* a stock-market crash, the Great Depression, and her every wish comes true.

Another brilliantly funny story, as inventive as anything in *Cat's Cradle* and the other novels, might take a bit of searching out. Not every library keeps old copies of *Argosy*, but if you can find one that does, look up the Christmas issue for 1954. "A Present for Big Nick" is the only seasonal story Vonnegut ever wrote. It begins with the strange case of a bunch of kids cowering in mortal fear of Santa Claus. To follow this out Vonnegut draws upon the same rich-poor, master-servant formula he's used so well before. The context is a Christmas party given by a boss for his employees and their children. But here Vonnegut reverses his usual structure of injecting middle-class familiarity into an exotic setting, since the employer is a mobster racketeer. An obnoxious bully, he makes it worse by dressing as Santa Claus to distribute presents and receive accolades of thanks. One kid's honesty breaks the Christmas party's chilling fear. Big Nick erupts; a henchman tries to restrain him and is slapped back: " 'Take your filt'y hands off me!' roared Santa. 'You wanna commit suicide?' " This encourages a general rout of Santa, as his helpers turn on him and administer the thrashing he deserves. Coincidently, a present from a rival gangster turns out to be a bomb, which ends the story. "Santa Claus," announces the henchman, "is dead."

That's half the book, and a good index to what Vonnegut was doing in the fifties. To finish out an afternoon of reading, you might try three of Vonnegut's *Post* stories about a high-school bandmaster, George Helmholtz, who saves the day for teenage life, love, and music in "Ambitious Sophomore" (May 1, 1954), "The Boy Who Hated Girls" (March 31, 1956), and "The No-Talent Kid" (October 25, 1952). Fathers and sons, and more teenage love, get the *Post*-Vonnegut treatment in "This Son of Mine . . ."(August 18, 1956) and

"Runaways" (April 15, 1961). When the most beautiful girl in town gets married, her disappointed beaux (every other man around) form a club, which Vonnegut calls "Lovers Anonymous" (*Redbook*, October 1963). And there's lovely sentimental mush in "Find Me a Dream" from the February 1961 *Cosmopolitan*, which carries the subhead: "No girl in her right mind would have fallen in love with Andy on purpose." Of course not, but this is a Kurt Vonnegut story.

In 1966, the year he started writing his first best-seller, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Vonnegut published his last regular magazine story. It was for *Venture*, fanciest of the world travel magazines, and took his average guy narrator into the most glamorous of circumstances, deckhanding on the Kennedy yacht as its skipper took it down the inland waterway to West Palm Beach. Although the story is the work of a fictionist, its narrative situation was real.

"I lived next door on Cape Cod to a guy named Frank Wirtanen," Vonnegut has revealed, "who was a skipper of Joe Kennedy's yacht, the *Marlin*. His son and one of my sons played on the same football team, and we were watching the first game of the season and he said, 'Hey you wanna go to West Palm?' and I said sure and so he said, 'O.K. You're hired.' " And so once again the humble guy-next-door was swept up into the world of money, fame, and glamor. It was quite a trip, and a fitting farewell by Vonnegut to the slick magazines.

Better take two rolls of dimes, because all this adds up to about one hundred pages of photocopying. But we don't have a cover yet, so try this: Imagine a young Kurt Vonnegut, tall and lanky, as he must have looked in 1950, lounging (white chinos, yellow sport shirt) at the fork of a country road, a field of soft greens and yellow flowers fading up into the title: *The Road Not Taken: The Early Fiction of Kurt Vonnegut*. If you are handy with a brush you just might paint it, but don't do an imitation Rockwell. For all the times both of them had work in the *Post*, the two never hit the same issue, and Norman Rockwell's covers had a soft sentimentality almost fully lacking in Vonnegut's stories.

Try instead for the effect of Amos Sewell, or of Harvey Kidder, both of whom illustrated many of these early Vonnegut works. Get the close detail of those wholesome Middle Americans, caught in the story's mundane action—but with that look of wild comedy just behind the eyes, ready to spill out into their lives. —*Jerome Klinkowitz*

Science Fiction Taken Lightly

Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision, by Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin. Oxford. $12.95; $2.95 (paper)

The names of Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin both carry considerable critical impact, and when these two men turned their attention to science fiction, much was expected of them by those involved in the study of SF. But *Structural Fabulation* (Notre Dame, 1975), Scholes' first adventure into the literary criticism of science fiction (reviewed in *NAR*, Winter 1975) was slight, and Rabkin treated SF as only one area of the broad spectrum of "the Fantastic" in *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton, 1976). Thus, when it became generally known that the two were collaborating on a new book on SF to be published by one of the world's most prestigious presses, there was a good deal of breath-holding in anticipation. However, after reading *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision* most serious students of SF are likely to release their pent-up respiration—not with a gasp of dismay, certainly—but with at least a mild sigh of disappointment.

The book is divided into the three sections of its title; of these, the second, dealing with science, is the easiest to discuss. Scholes and Rabkin offer a rapid (and, perforce, sketchy) overview of the history of science, and a somewhat more detailed consideration of those branches of science they consider most significant in SF. These branches include physics, astronomy, computer science, thermodynamics, biology, and psychology; inexplicably excluded is anthropology, which has become increasingly pertinent to the works of such SF authors as Ursula K. LeGuin and Samuel R. Delany. These considerations of specific scientific fields are interesting to a reader with some prior knowledge of the subject, but are truncated enough to befuddle a scientific illiterate. Various science fiction works are cited as examples of the genre's uses of particular branches of scientific knowledge, but the examples are merely illustrative; no attempt is made to evaluate the importance of science to science fiction (or the lack thereof), nor is there any attempt to discern a relationship (or the absence of one) between the "accuracy" of a work's portrayal of science and the work's value.

The initial section, dealing with the history of science fiction, is the longest of the three, though the sketch it draws is considerably less detailed than can be found in such other generally-available books on the development of SF as Brian Aldiss' *Billion Year Spree* (Schocken, 1973) or James Gunn's *Alternate Worlds: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction* (Prentice-Hall, 1975). But in its departures from mere historical sketching into a series of brief analyses of well-chosen representative passages from specific authors, the book makes a number of significant contributions to the criticism of science fiction. Moreover, in a subsection titled "Anti-Science Fiction" (pp. 42-51), a new and interesting effort at genre-definition is made by contrasting the speculative ethical systems of science fiction with the traditional ethical vision expressed in religious fantasy—with C. S. Lewis' space trilogy serving as the point of departure.

Unfortunately, there are some blatant factual errors in the "history" section (as one minor example, Lex Luthor, the arch foe of the comic-strip hero, Superman, is casually identified as "Lothar" on p. 108), and the errors are not always casual. In discussing a chart Robert A. Heinlein drew to map out the stories of his Future History series which were collected in a book titled *The Past Through Tomorrow*, Scholes and Rabkin note that "Unfortunately, in the paperback version released by Berkeley in 1975, the chart has been omitted, though Damon Knight's Introduction indicates that it should be there" (p. 54). The painful fact is that the chart *is* included in that edition—albeit in an obscure position inside (pp. 660-661), not in the front or back of the book, and not indicated in a table of contents.

This is not to nit-pick. I cite these examples not because they are terribly damaging to the work, but because they are easily-checkable errors which should not appear in a scholarly work from a major press. They indicate one sort of authorial carelessness in checking the materials the book treats.

A more important example occurs in the discussion of Heinlein's Future History plan, which Rabkin and Scholes state has extreme importance in Heinlein's early career, but little or none in the later works. To support this view they cite Alexei Panshin's 1968 study, *Heinlein in Dimension*, but they seem unaware that in his latest (1973) novel, *Time Enough for Love* (which they don't treat), Heinlein returned to his Future History plan, and utilized as protagonist a character from the earlier works in the series. It is, I suppose, possible that Rabkin and Scholes are unaware of *Time Enough for Love*—though the book is well known in science fiction circles. It's also possible that for some unstated reason they don't feel that *Time Enough for Love* "really" should be thought of as part of the Future History series—a subtle but perhaps arguable view. Or it's possible that they have merely excluded the book in their desire to present a consistent thesis.

There are other similar problems. *Destination Moon* was *the* seminal SF film of the early fifties, and had an impact on the field parallel to that of *2001: A Space Odyssey* in the late sixties (though the field had expanded considerably by then). Yet *Destination Moon* is unmentioned in the discussion of SF in films—though several less significant films of marginal SF interest are treated. In many ways *Destination Moon* was an execrable film, and Scholes and Rabkin might omit it from consideration on grounds of artistic merit—but they treat other films of the fifties which were at least as bad and had far less impact on science fiction. *The Thing* is mentioned as "clearly" a horror film (as opposed to an SF film), but no notice is taken of its derivation from the novelette "Who Goes There" by John Campbell, the father of science fiction's "Golden Age" of the forties and fifties.

On a grander scale, omissions affect the entire section on the history of science fiction. In tracing the development of SF as genre, Scholes and Rabkin concentrate almost exclusively on novels, practically ignoring the shorter forms. This bias seems particularly strange since SF has tended to emphasize the short story form—at least partially because of the genre's connections with the pulp magazines. Nevertheless, with the exception of such sequentially-related groups of stories as Heinlein's Future History series, Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, and Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*, Scholes and Rabkin make only a few passing references to a very small number of SF short stories. The result is that certain critically-praised and award-winning authors (e.g., Gene Wolfe and James Tiptree, Jr.) who have not produced SF novels are not even mentioned. The book's bibliography includes a list of award-winning SF novels; little additional effort would have been required to make a similar list of award-winning science fiction stories. Since one doesn't know if short stories are virtually ignored because Scholes and Rabkin don't know them or because they think the shorter forms of SF are generally not important, one can't help but mistrust other aspects of the work.

* * *

In the third, or "vision," section, Scholes and Rabkin undertake to examine "ten representative novels"—only two of the ten by American authors, although America has had by far the strongest national influence on the field. The readings tend to be a bit long on plot summary—perhaps Scholes and Rabkin presume that their audience will not be acquainted with the novels—but some of these readings are insightful and solid, particularly the ones on Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* and John Brunner's *The Shockwave Rider*. But blatant errors and disquieting omissions badly mar this section of the book.

In the treatment of Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz,* we are told that the book is divided into three sections and that:

> The sections are "Fiat Lux," a medieval story of simple faith and sinewy spirituality in the deserts of Utah 600 years after a nuclear holocaust; "Fiat Homo," a Renaissance story set 600 years after the first; . . . and "Fiat Voluntas Tua," the story, 600 years later still, of the events leading to and flowing from yet another nuclear holocaust. The Latin rubrics ("Let there be light," "Let there be man," "Let thy will be done") . . . move from a hopeful Genesis to a resigned Revelations. (p. 221)

But despite the emphasis on the ordering of the sections, and the analysis of why the ordering is proper, the *fact* is that it is the *first* section which is titled "Fiat Homo" and the *second* which is titled "Fiat Lux." Moreover, the titling of the second section is significant, since its narrative deals with an attempt to rediscover the secret of electric illumination in the form of the arc lamp. The first testing of the lamp takes place as a group of monks recite in Latin the passages from Genesis treating the first day of creation—in which the words *Fiat lux* occur. (One is tempted to say that Miller's structuring of his book plays hob with Scholes' and Rabkin's interpretation of it.)

The role of "hero of the second section" of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is assigned by Scholes and Rabkin to a character called the Poet, "who finally dies not in defense of his art but in defense of the order that sheltered him" (p. 223). But the fact is that the Poet—who appears in considerably less than half of the section and who hardly seems to be "the hero"—dies away from the monastery, shot for attacking a cavalry officer who had been brutally murdering a female refugee. Again, what is exasperating is that one knows Scholes and Rabkin have their facts wrong, but one can't entirely dismiss what they say. I find myself going back to the text, looking for evidence of the Poet's "heroism"—and even finding myself, in part, persuaded of it. But then I realize my own silliness in looking for evidence to support a view presented in a book which doesn't factually control the work it's treating.

* * *

As with the "history" section, there are some truly remarkable oversights in the "vision" segment. To offer one example, consider Scholes' and Rabkin's treatment of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*. In that novel, beings from outer space called "The Overlords" arrive on earth and take control of mankind's development, guiding us toward a great change in which we will transcend ourselves and become one with "The Overmind"—something the Overlords themselves will never be able to do. When the Overlords first arrive, they don't permit themselves to be seen by men, and they communicate to mankind by having one man, Stormgren, meet with one Overlord, Karellen, in a spaceship. Scholes and Rabkin make much of the Biblical parallels and allusions they detect in this situation:

> The outstanding example in Western culture of the utopia of society apotheosized is the Bible. Karellen, with his "sheer size" and "voice like an organ" upon whom "no man may look and live" (Exodus 33:19) is God to Stormgren's Moses. Just as man is finally superior to the angels, because, unlike them, he can still win to immortality, so the children of man are superior to the Overlords, despite any technology they may possess. (p. 220)

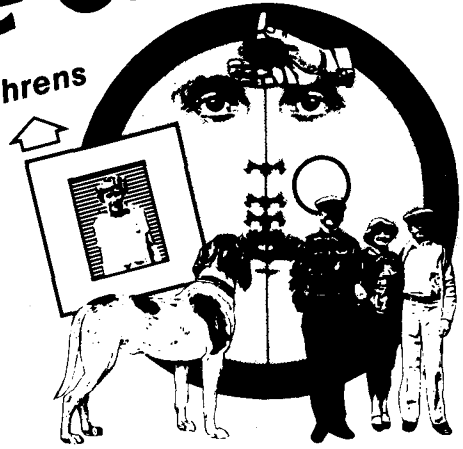
Ignore, if you can, the shift from Overlord-as-God to Overlord-as-Angel, and consider instead the fact that *nowhere* in their treatment of *Childhood's End*, despite their concern with Christian allusions, do Scholes and Rabkin even mention what the Overlords actually look like. But Clarke does, and his description seems highly significant to the Scholes-Rabkin view. As Karellen exits from his spaceship and, for the first time, permits mankind to see him, we are told:

> There was no mistake. The leathery wings, the little horns, the barbed tail—all were there. The most terrible legends had come to life, out of the unknown past. Yet now it stood smiling, in ebon majesty, with the sunlight gleaming upon its tremendous body.
>
> (New York: Ballantine, 1953, p. 68.)

The point, of course, is not that the Overlords' appearance is irreconcilable with the interpretation of Scholes and Rabkin; it is rather that the omission of reference to that appearance cannot help but mislead a reader unfamiliar with the book.

On the other hand, one should not presume that the work is saturated with the kinds of gaffes I have indicated; insights and enlightenments are to be found here, and I would point particularly to the portion of the third section titled "Forms and Themes," which seems an interesting and thoughtful synthesis of several diverse kinds of thinking about SF. But ultimately, despite the respect due its two authors (in fact, perhaps *because* of that respect), the book must be read with considerable caution. While it says many fine things clearly and gracefully, it also leaves unsaid much that it should be required to say. Its subject and its audience deserve more careful treatment.

—*Thomas J. Remington*



Jerome Klinkowitz
The Life of Fiction
Graphics by Roy R. Behrens

Klinkowitz and Behrens have exploited all aspects of the printed page to offer lively and readable criticism of the "new fiction" and those who write it. Descriptions, critiques, references, interviews, personal experiences, letters, telephone conversations, and unique collages illuminate this critique of the "superfiction" of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Donald Barthelme, Hunter S. Thompson, Ishmael Reed, Ronald Sukenick, Gilbert Sorrentino, and others. 244 pages. $10.00.

University of Illinois Press URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801

Odd and Uncanny

Strangeness: A Collection of Curious Tales, edited by Thomas M. Disch and Charles Naylor. Scribners. $8.95

The title of this anthology comes from Bacon's dictum, quoted by Poe by way of introducing "Ligeia," that "There is no exquisite beauty without some *strangeness* in the proportion." Harold Bloom, who is probably our greatest current apostle of romanticism, observes somewhere that it is the evanescence of what we most love, the fact that its value is proportionate to its temporality and impermanence, that comprises its beauty. Hence the strangeness of beauty expresses the acuity of its imminent loss—the fear it thereby inspires. Ironically, the alternative to this functional view is essentially Kantian: that the strangeness of beauty reflects its transcendental reality, the fact that it embodies a truer or higher form of existence. The stories in this anthology combine and relate both points of view respecting beauty and its strangeness with remarkable effect.

Virginia Woolf writes in "Solid Objects"—herein anthologized—of a young man seemingly destined for a brilliant career in British politics; he gradually succumbs to the fascination of the inanimate, accidental and unique—a lump of glass, for example, buried in the sand by the sea. "No doubt the act of burrowing in the sand had something to do with it," he notes. In the end, he has a collection of curious objects on his mantelpiece, his career all but forgotten.

Thomas Mann's hero in "The Wardrobe" has a few months to live. He travels to an unknown city, rents a room and discovers in the wardrobe a girl of ravishing beauty who tells him stories "sad . . . without relief [that] rested like a sweet burden upon the heart and made it beat longer and more blissfully," and who also surrenders to him sexually. Mann concludes that no one can assume the responsibility of saying whether or not this was all a dream. It is obviously a higher, more meaningful form of existence: hence the question. The life-enhancing properties of this experience are precisely a function of its masochism; indeed, masochism is seen to serve the affirmative purpose of an accommodation to reality. Thus Mann's story exemplifies the strangeness of beauty as a paradoxical relation between reality and its evanescence.

Joyce Carol Oates has a story in this anthology in which all the characters, mythic, medieval, totemic and symbolic, constantly change and lose their identities. The story illustrates both the evanescence of experience and the ambiguity of symbolism. The obvious point is that, apart from experience and symbolism, reality and impermanence in their equivocal manifestations have no meaning; the story is a sort of empiricist parable. It is the strangest tale in this volume precisely because it epitomizes the evanescence of reality and its objectivity as a categorical—or categorizable—imperative.

In their introduction, the editors cite Freud's essay on the uncanny which begins by observing that the German word for "uncanny," *unheimlich*, is often used interchangeably with its opposite, *heimlich*, or "homelike." This paradox can of course be construed as a reference to nonsensuous or transcendental existence. In experiencing the uncanny we are confronted with a curious relation between sensuous and nonsensuous perception, reality and impermanence, abstract and concrete. —*Martin Lebowitz*

LETTERS

A few responses to the Spring NAR . . .

Some reactions to Stephen Minot's essay on literary magazines were directed to the Editor, while others were sent directly to the author. We offer a sampling of both.

To the Editor:

Stephen Minot may publish in the 'right' little magazines so far as academic reputation goes, but evidently they are not the right ones to bring him the kind of reader response he wants. I have edited, published, and written for the 'wrong' little magazines for nine years now, half the eighteen Minot claims—but no article, poem, review, or short story of mine has ever failed to draw at least one letter of comment, and that covers over 200 items in typewriter/offset, mimeograph, and newsprint periodicals ranging in circulation from 150 (Breakthrough) *to 66,000* (The Berkeley Paper). *Further, those publications I have edited—* Samisdat, The Reed, Quester, *and* The Tower Anthology— *have always averaged at least one letter-of-comment per contributor, often many more.*

The essential difference in my readership and Minot's lies not in circulation figures but in circulation percentages. His publications may reach virtually every major library in the English-speaking world—but reach more libraries than live bodies, and in those libraries do not attract live bodies. My publications usually reach less than 500 subscribers altogether, but virtually every one is a live body, and few of these publications ever do reach library shelves; Samisdat, *with fifteen library subscribers, probably leads the list, and reaches some forty live bodies for every librarian. We reach live bodies by presenting lively material in an economical format—no typesetting unless we own the equipment and can do it ourselves, no perfect binding when we can avoid it, no outside, professional printing, and the cheapest bond paper our presses and mimeograph machines can feed. Librarians and academics turn their heads away, but we find a hell of a lot more lifelong, self-supporting little magazine operators among us than among them: among you, to be blunt. For details and examples see my chapbook* On Small Press As Class Struggle, *enclosed. Read it, Minot. Read it carefully.*

Regarding the National Endowment for the Arts and promoting little magazines, I advance a contradictory concept to Minot's: instead of subsidizing anyone, artificially supporting some efforts at expense of all, abolish grants altogether. Every little magazine would thus have to stand or fall on energy, merit, and initiative. SAMISDAT *would live. We've already lived for five years, publishing sixty issues, supporting one full-time staffer for three years and two full-time staffers for the past year. Perhaps a good many university quarterlies would die. Such is the Darwinian process. I conclude with a challenge: if you with your quarterlies truly believe you offer a superior literary product, cast aside your tax-provided crutches and compete for our live bodies—or is quality for you alone to define, create, and appreciate? So thinking, don't expect any cheers from the rest of us.*

Merritt Clifton
Brigham, Quebec
Canada

*

To the Editor:

Your Spring issue is wonderful! It made me neglect the necessities of life (laundry, dusting), made me late for dinner and the theatre, made my husband angry, and made me gather together my collection of small press publications and try to do something . . . .

These literary reviews came with me to a Poetry Workshop sponsored for the community through the University of Bridgeport Office of Continuing Education. As Coordinator of these Saturday Writing Workshops, I could use the half-time break for a spiel, paraphrasing Minot's essay. With samples on hand, I delivered my commercial in the best Betty Furness tradition; people began to copy names, addresses—the beginning of an increased audience . . . .

I hereby resolve not to renew subscriptions to commercial magazines, but to get my recipes from hand-me-down copies and to recycle my dollars into more small press publications. Stephen Minot, I will be your disciple. Thank you for helping me use the opportunities I have.

Gloria Lynn Wolk
Milford, Conn.

*

Dear Mr. Minot:

. . . I would like to volunteer to help if your suggestions could be implemented and if a group is created to bring about change in the approach of the NEA or of other organizations which affect the writing community. I would appreciate your letting me know if there is anything I can do short of quitting writing myself. Please keep me in mind if there is work to do in the future.

I have enjoyed reading your work, and I will continue to look for your stories in the magazines I see.

Kent Nelson
Ridgway, Colo.

*

Dear Stephen Minot,

What an intelligent piece that one of yours in NAR is! It's the best thinking on the old subject I've seen for a long, long time and I'm delighted that you've put it all so cogently. . . . I subscribe to about eight literary magazines and, after reading your article, I added six more.

Footnote: No, Playboy *isn't going to do that exposé you mention. About seven of our staffers write for small magazines and I make sure that our library subscribes to a flock of them—and they're circulated, too.*

Robie Macauley
Chicago, Ill.

. . . and a postcript to the summer NAR

. . . I do wish that I had known you intended to use the dates (1936 and 1941) from that pamphlet on the Workshop's history. Although those are given out as the "official" dates by the Workshop itself, they are not accurate. Schramm didn't become director until the spring of 1939 when he took over the advanced seminar in creative writing on Edwin Ford Piper's sudden death of a heart attack, and Engle didn't become acting director until the spring of 1942 when Schramm left Iowa City for war service in Washington. But that's a small matter really.

I look forward to reading future issues of your fine publication and am gratified to have been associated with it. Hope your summer is a pleasant one.

Steve Wilbers
Iowa City, Iowa

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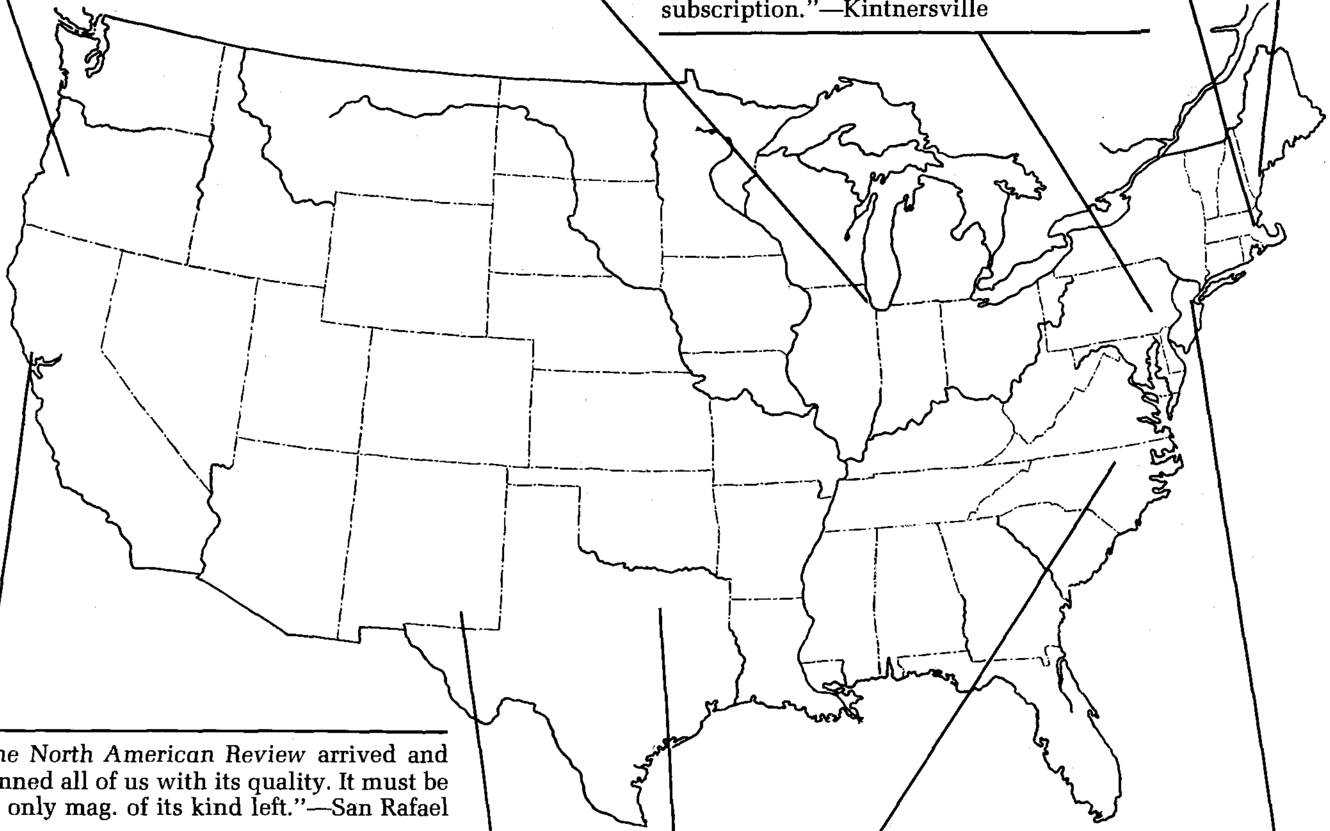

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